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THE

EARLY DAYS OF CHRISTIANITY.

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OF

CHRISTIANITY.

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BY

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TO THE QUEEN.

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πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως.—HEB. i. 1.
ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ.—EPH. iii. 10.

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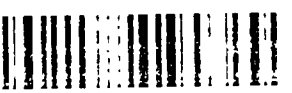
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Book IV.

(*continued*).

JUDAIC CHRISTIANITY.

THE

EARLY DAYS OF CHRISTIANITY.

Book IV. (*continued*).

JUDAIC CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

Γίνεσθε δὲ ποιηταὶ λόγου.—Ja. i. 22.

Of the canonicity of the Epistle of St. James there can hardly be a reasonable doubt, and there is strong ground for believing it to be authentic. It is true that Origen is the first who ascribes it to St. James, and he only speaks of it as an Epistle "currently attributed to him."[1] Clemens of Alexandria, though he wrote on the Catholic Epistles, does not appear to have known it.[2] Tertullian, from his silence, seems either not to have known it, or not to have accepted it as genuine. It is not mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment. It is a curious fact that even in the pseudo-Clementines it is not directly appealed to. It is classed by Eusebius among the Antilegomena,[3] but he seems himself to have accepted

[1] Orig. *in Joann.* xix. If we could trust the translation of Rufinus (*e.g.*, *Hom. in Gen.* xxvi. 18), in other parts of his commentaries he spoke of it as St. James's, and even called it "the Divine Epistle."

[2] Cassiodorus says that he wrote upon it, but "Jude" ought to be read for James (see Westcott *On the Canon*, p. 353). Eusebius only says that Clemens in his *Outlines* commented even on disputed books: "I mean the Epistle of Jude, and the rest of the Catholic Epistles, and that of Barnabas, &c."

[3] νοθεύεται (Euseb. ii. 23).

it. Theodore of Mopsuestia rejected it. On the other hand, there can be little doubt, from the occurrence of parallels to its phraseology, that it was favourably known to Clemens of Rome, Hermas, Irenæus, and Hippolytus. Jerome vindicated its genuineness against the opinion that it was forged in the name of James.[1] It is quoted by Dionysius of Alexandria; and it has the important evidence of the Peshito in its favour. Thus, the Syrian Church received it early, though it was not till the fourth century that it was generally accepted by the Greek and Latin Churches. Nor was it till A.D. 397 that the Council of Carthage placed it in the Canon. On the other hand, the Jewish-Christian tendencies of the Epistle, and what have been called its Ebionising opinions, agree so thoroughly with all that we know of James and the Church of Jerusalem, that they form a very powerful argument from internal evidence in favour of its being a genuine work of the "Bishop" of Jerusalem. Suspicion has been thrown on it because of the good Greek in which it is written, and because of the absence of the essential doctrines of Christianity.[2] On the first difficulty I shall touch later. The second is rather a proof that the letter *is* authentic, because otherwise, on this ground, and on the ground of its apparent contradiction of St. Paul, it would never have conquered the dogmatic prejudices which were an obstacle to its acceptance. The single fact that it was known to St. Peter, and had exercised a deep influence upon him, is enough to outweigh any deficiency of external evidence.[3]

In this Epistle, then, St. James has left us a precious

[1] *De Virr. Illustr.* 2. It must, however, be admitted that Jerome's remark is somewhat vacillating.

[2] See Davidson's *Introd.* i. 303.

[3] See *supra*, vol. i. p. 129.

heritage of his thoughts, a precious manual of all that was purest and loftiest in Jewish Christianity. Having passed into the Church through the portals of the Synagogue, and having exulted in joyous obedience to a glorious Law,[1] the Hebraists could not believe with St. Paul that the Institutions of Sinai had fulfilled no loftier function than that of bringing home to the human heart the latent consciousness of sin. They thought that the abrogation of Mosaism would give a perilous licence to sinful passions. St. James also writes as one of those who clung fast to the prerogatives of Israel, and could not persuade themselves that the coming of the Jewish Messiah, so long expected, would have no other national effect than to deprive them of every exclusive privilege, and place them on the same level as the heathens from whom they had so grievously suffered. Further than this, his letter shows some alarm lest a subjective dogmatism should usurp the place of a practical activity, and lest phrases about faith should be accepted as an excuse, if not for Antinomian licence, at least for dreamy indifference to the duties of daily life. St. James keenly dreaded a falling asunder of knowledge and action.[2] His letter might seem at first sight to be the most direct antithesis to the Epistles of St. Paul to the Galatians and the Romans, and to reach no higher standpoint than that of an idealised Judaism which is deficient in the specific elements of Christianity. It does not even mention the word Gospel. The name of Jesus occurs in it but twice. Nothing is said in it of the work of Redemption. Even the rules of morality are enforced without any appeal to those specific Christian motives which give

[1] Ps. cxix. *passim*.

[2] Wiesinger, *Einl.* p. 42.

to Christian morality its glow and enthusiasm, and which occur so repeatedly in the Epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John. "*Be ye doers of the word,*" he says, "*not hearers only.*"[1] "*Who is wise among you? Let him show forth his works with meekness of wisdom.*"[2] "*Adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?*"[3] "*Take the prophets, my brethren, as an example of suffering and of patience.*"[4] "*Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl.*"[5] Is it possible to deny that there is a difference between the tone of these appeals and such as "*I have been crucified with Christ.*"[6] "*But I say walk in the Spirit.*"[7] "*The love of Christ constraineth us.*"[8] "*We were buried with Him by baptism unto death . . . so let us also walk in newness of life.*"[9] "*As he who called you is holy, so become ye holy.*"[10] "*This is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we love one another.*"[11] It was the presence of such peculiarities which made Luther take up his hasty, scornful, and superficial view of the Epistle. "On that account," he said, "the Epistle of James, compared with them (the Epistles of St. Paul), is a veritable straw-Epistle (*recht strohern*), for it lacks all Evangelical character."[12] "This Epistle of James, although rejected by the ancients,[13] I praise and esteem good withal, because it setteth not forth any doctrine of man. . . . . But to give my opinion, yet without the prejudice of any one, I count it to be no Apostle's writing, and this is my reason: first, because, contrary

[1] i. 22. [2] iii. 13. [3] iv. 4. [4] v. 5.
[5] v. 1. [6] Gal. ii. 20. [7] Gal. v. 16. [8] 2 Cor. v. 14.
[9] Rom. vi. 4. [10] 1 Pet. i. 15. [11] 1 John iii. 11.
[12] Preface to New Testament of 1524, p. 105.
[13] This is hardly a fair account of the history of the Epistle and its reception into the Canon.

to St. Paul's writings and all other Scriptures, it puts righteousness in works," on which account he thinks that its author was merely "some good, pious man," though in other places he seems to think that it was written by James the son of Zebedee.[1] It was, perhaps, hardly strange that Luther, who did not possess the clue by which alone the apparent contradictions to St. Paul could be explained, should have arrived at this opinion. To him the letter seemed to be in direct antagonism to the truth which had wrought his own conversion, and which became powerful in his hands for the overthrow of sacerdotal usurpation and the revival of religious faith. But this unfavourable opinion of the Epistle lingered on. It is found in the Magdeburg centuriators and in Ströbel, who said that, "no matter in what sense we take the Epistle, it is always in conflict with the remaining parts of Holy Writ." On similar grounds Erasmus, Cajetan, Grotius, and Wetstein hesitated to accept it.[2] Such views are untenable, because they are

[1] In 1519, he calls it "wholly inferior to the Apostolic majesty" (in the seventh Thesis against Eck); in 1520, "unworthy of an Apostolic spirit" (*De Captiv. Babylon.*). In the *Postills* he says it was written by no Apostle, and is "nowhere fully conformable to the true Apostolic character and manner, and to pure doctrine." In his preface to the Epistle, in 1522 (*Werke*, xiv. 148), he speaks almost contemptuously. "He" (St. James), he says, "has aimed to refute those who relied on faith without works, *and is too weak for his task in mind, understanding, and words*, mutilates the Scriptures, and thus directly (*stracks*) contradicts Paul and all Scripture, seeking to accomplish by enforcing the law what the Apostles successfully effect by love. Therefore, I will not place his Epistle in my Bible among the proper leading books." Nor did he ever, as is sometimes asserted, retract these opinions. His *Table Talk* shows that he held them to the last, and considered St. James irreconcilable with St. Paul (*Colloq.* lxix. 4). See the quotation, *infra*, p. 90. Archdeacon Hare (*Mission of the Comforter*, ii. 815) rightly says that "Luther's words cannot always be weighed in jewellers' scales."

[2] The objections of Schleiermacher, De Wette, Reuss, Baur, Schwegler, Ritschl, Davidson, etc., are based on critical and other grounds.

onesided. We shall consider afterwards the alleged polemic against St. Paul; and in judging of the Epistle generally we must bear in mind its avowedly practical character, and the entire training of the writer and of those to whom it was addressed. The purpose for which it was written was to encourage the Jewish Christians to the endurance of trial by stirring them up to a brighter energy of holy living. And in doing this he neither urges a slavish obedience nor a terrified anxiety. If he does not dwell, as assuredly he does not, on the specific Christian motives, he does not at any rate put in their place a ceremonial righteousness. His ideals are the ideals of truth and wisdom, not of accurate legality. The Law which he has in view is not the threatful Law of Moses, which gendereth to bondage, but the royal Law, the perfect Law of liberty, the Law as it was set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. He is the representative, not of Judaism, but of Christian Judaism—that is, of Judaism in its transformation and transfiguration. A book may be in the highest sense Christian and religious without using the formulas of religion and Christianity. The Book of Esther is a Sacred book, a book of the inspired Canon, and a book justly valued, though it does not so much as mention the name of God. The bottom of the ocean is always presupposed as existent though it be neither visible nor alluded to. And, as we shall see later on, there are passages in the Epistle of St. James which involve the deepest truths of that Christian faith of which he avows himself a humble follower, although it was not his immediate object to develop the dogmatic side of Christianity at all. If some of the weightiest Christian doctrines are not touched

upon, there are, on the other hand, more references to the discourses of Christ in this Epistle than in all the others put together.[1]

If we could be certain of the date of the Epistle, and of the characters whom St. James had chiefly in view, some light would doubtless be thrown on these peculiarities. But on these subjects we are unfortunately in doubt. Amid the differing opinions respecting the date, I side with those who look upon the Epistle as one of the later, not as perhaps the earliest, in the Canon. One or two facts seem to point in this direction. On the one hand, the Epistle could not have been written after the year A.D. 63, because in that year St. James was martyred. On the other hand, the condition and wide dissemination of the Churches to which it is addressed; the prevalence of the *name* Christ instead of the *title* "the Christ";[2] the growth of respect for persons as shown in distinction of seats; the sense of delay in the Second Coming,[3] and other circumstances, make it necessary to assume that many years had elapsed since the Day of Pentecost. Further, it seems probable that some of St. James's allusions may find their explanation in a state of political excitement, caused by hopes and fears which, perhaps, within a year or two of the time when it was written, broke out in the wild scenes of the Jewish revolt. Lastly, it seems impossible to deny that although St. James *may* have written his arguments about faith and works[4] without having read what had been written on the same subject by St. Paul,[5] and in

[1] See Döllinger, *First Age of the Church*, p. 107 (tr. Oxenham).
[2] ii. 7. [3] v. 7, 8. [4] ii. 21—26.
[5] It is not necessary to assume in consequence that "Apostolical

the Epistle to the Hebrews, still his language finds its most reasonable explanation in the supposition that he is striving to remove the dangerous inferences to which St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith was liable when it was wrested by the unlearned and the ignorant.[1] If so, the Epistle cannot have been written more than a year or two before St. James's death, since the date of the Epistle to the Galatians is A.D. 57, and that of the Epistle to the Romans A.D. 58. It has been urged against this conclusion that if it had been written later than the so-called "Council of Jerusalem" in A.D. 50, it must have contained references to the great dispute about the obligations of circumcision. But the circumcision question, fiercely as it was debated at the time, was speedily forgotten; and it must be borne in mind that St. James is writing exclusively to Jews. Again, it has been urged that the trials to which he alludes must have been the persecutions at Jerusalem, in which Saul and Herod Agrippa I. were respectively the chief movers. But persecution in one form or other was the chronic trial of Jewish as well as of other

Epistles were transcribed by the hundred and circulated broadcast"; or that "copies of what was written for Rome or Galatia would be at once despatched by a special courier to the Bishop of Jerusalem" (Plumptre, p. 42). The Church of Jerusalem was kept well acquainted with the movements and tenets of St. Paul, and any of the Passover pilgrims from Asia Minor might have informed James of the drift of the Apostle's arguments, and of some of his more striking expressions, even if he could not procure a copy of a complete Epistle.

[1] Baur says (*Ch. Hist.* p. 128), "It is impossible to deny that the Epistle of James presupposes the Pauline doctrine of justification." He admits that "it may not be aimed directly against the Apostle himself," but says that, if so, "its tendency is distinctly anti-Pauline." Nevertheless, both St. Paul and St. James might, in the sense in which they were alone intended, have interchanged each other's apparently antagonistic formulæ. See *infra*. pp. 90—96.

Christians. To refer to the existence of deep poverty as a sign that the Epistle was written about the time of the general famine of A.D. 44 is to rely on a very shadowy argument, since famines at this period were by no means unfrequent, and poverty was the permanent condition of the saints at Jerusalem. I therefore disagree with the views of Neander, Alford, and Dr. Plumptre, who argue for the early date; and I agree with those of De Wette, Bishop Wordsworth, and many others, who fix the date of the Epistle about the year A.D. 61.[1]

If, however, the date of the Epistle be uncertain, we have no uncertainty about the place where it was written. That is undeniably Jerusalem. When once settled in that city, St. James, with the natural stationariness of the Oriental, seems never to have left it. Its Temple and ritual would have had for him a strong attraction. The notion of writing the Epistle may have partly originated from the circumstance that the Jewish high priest sent missives from the Holy City, which were received with profound respect throughout the length and breadth of the Dispersion. Similarly, the first bishop of the metropolis of Christianity was one to whom every Jewish Church might naturally look for advice and consolation. The physical allusions in the Epistle to oil, and wine, and figs, to salt and bitter springs, to the Kausôn, or burning wind of Palestine, and, above all, to the former and the latter rain, show that the letter was despatched

[1] Eusebius (*H. E.* ii. 23; iii. 11) gives A.D. 69 as the date of St. James's death, apparently because Hegesippus said that the siege happened "*immediately* afterwards." But if the narrative of Josephus is correct, St. James could not have been killed *later* than A.D. 63. This is the date given by Eusebius in his *Chronicon*.

from Jerusalem. Some have supposed that it was written at Joppa; but this is only a precarious inference from the allusion to the life of the shore and the traffic in the harbour, the fish and the wonders of the sea.[1] There can, at any rate, be no doubt that it emanated from Palestine.

In this Palestinian origin I see an explanation of some of the phenomena of the Epistle. We see, for instance, why it is that St. James seems to be speaking sometimes to Jews and sometimes to Christians, sometimes to all the Churches of the Dispersion and sometimes almost exclusively to the Churches of Judæa. The difficulty vanishes when we remember the position of the writer. He is addressing "the Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion." It was a sufficiently wide range—wider than that of any one of the Epistles. It included Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, dwellers in Cappadocia, Galatia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya about Cyrene, strangers at Rome, Cretes and Arabians, Jews and proselytes.[2] But of the varying conditions of these widely-scattered communities he could know almost nothing. He could have no information about them except such as he might now and then derive from the general talk of some Passover pilgrim. He addresses them, indeed, as a "Christian high priest wearing the golden mitre" might have done, or as a sort of ideal *Resh Galútha*, or "Prince of the Captivity," might have addressed his fellow-countrymen in later days.[3] But he could only

[1] James i. 6; iii. 4; iv. 13 (Hausrath, *N. Test. Zeitg.* 1, § 5).

[2] Acts ii. 9—12. The reader will find a sketch of the character of the Jewish Dispersion, and of the events which led to it, in my *Life of St. Paul*, i. pp. 115—125.

[3] The Jews of the Dispersion in Babylonia were called "the Gola," or

speak on topics which he might infer to be necessary because he saw that they were necessary for the Syrian Churches, with whose trials and temptations he had an exclusive familiarity. His remarks, for instance, about the conduct of the rich, and the bearing of the poor towards them, have created the greatest perplexity. These rich men, whose arrogance is described as so outrageous, were they Jews, Christians, or Gentiles? I think that I find an explanation of his allusions in conduct which he saw daily taking place under his own eyes. The Jewish Church at Jerusalem was at that time governed by a clique of aristocratic Sadducees. They were men of immense wealth, which they increased by violent and dishonest exactions. Profoundly hated by the people, they were yet kept secure in their positions by the close understanding which they usually preserved with the Herods and the Romans. Outwardly, therefore, they were treated with abject reverence, and in spite of the curses, not loud but deep, which were secretly uttered against them, and which were soon to burst in vengeance upon their heads, they were able to exercise an almost uncontrolled authority. When we read side by side the denunciations hurled by St. James against the tyrannous greed and cruel insolence of the rich, and the eight-fold and thrice-repeated curse of the Talmud[1] against the blood-stained and worldly hierarchs who disgraced the mitre of Aaron, it will be seen, I think, that these passages of the Epistle sprang, at least in part, from the indignation with which the Christian

"Deportation," and they enjoyed a sort of independence under a ruler of their own choice known as the *Resh Galûtha*. See on his office, Etheridge, *Hebr. Lit.* 151, *seq.*

[1] Pesachim, 57, *a*; Tosefta Menachoth; Derenbourg, *Palest.* 233; Geiger, *Urschrift*, 118.

bishop had witnessed the conduct of the detested Boethusîm and Benî-Hanan. To their vengeance he at last succumbed, and under their avarice and worldliness the Jews of that day vainly struggled. St. James says :—

"Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?"[1]

And again—

"Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. . . . Behold the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth. . . . Ye have lived in pleasure in the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter; ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you."[2]

It is obvious that these remarks could not apply to the treatment of the poor by the rich throughout all the Ghettos and Christian communities of the world. In the infant Churches, during the whole of the first century, there were "not many rich."[3] The few wealthy and noble Gentiles who were converted were so far from being able to wield such a tyranny as St. James describes, that, in the gatherings of the converts, they might be under the spiritual supervision of presbyters and "bishops" who occupied no higher earthly rank than that of slaves. Moreover, no Christian could have dared to "blaspheme"—that is, to speak injuriously of the name of "Christian" or of "Christ." But St. James is not thinking exclusively of Christian communities. He is writing of things which were on the horizon of his daily life. Read what the Tal-

[1] Ja. ii. 6, 7. [2] v. 1—6. [3] 1 Cor. i. 26.

mudists say of the priestly families by which he was surrounded, and his allusions at once become explicable. For thus in the tract Yoma (f. 9, *a*) we find:—

"What is meant by Ps. x. 27, 'The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened'? The first clause alludes to the 410 years of the first Temple, during which period there were but eighteen high priests. But '*the years of the wicked shall be shortened*' is illustrated by the fact that during the 426 years of the second Temple there were more than 300 high priests in succession. So that, deducting the forty years of Simon the Righteous, and the eighty of Rabbi Jochanan, and the ten of Ishmael Ben Phabi, it is evident that not one of the remaining high priests lived to hold office for a whole year."[1] The supposed fact is unhistorical, but the remark shows in what low estimation these later hierarchs were held.

Again, in the tract Pesachim (57, *a*) we find one of several repetitions of the famous malediction on those priestly families:—

"Woe unto the family of Boethus,
Woe to their bludgeons!
Woe to the house of Hanan,
Woe to their viper hissings!
Woe to the family of Canthera,
Woe to their libels!
Woe to the family of Ishmael Ben-Phabi
Woe to their blows with the fist!

"They are themselves chief priests, their sons are treasurers, their sons-in-law captains of the Temple, and their servants strike the people with their staves."

[1] Hershon, *Talm. Miscell.* p. 107. All insolent priests were supposed to be descended from Pashur, the son of Immer. Kiddushin, f. 70 *b*. (id. p. 244).

Again, we are told that the Vestibule of the Temple uttered four cries—"Depart hence, sons of Eli, who defile the Temple of the Eternal! Depart, Issachar of Kephar Barkaï, who only carest for self, and profanest the victims consecrated to Heaven!" And again: "Open, ye gates, let Ishmael Ben Phabi enter, the disciple of Phinehas (son of Eli), to do the duties of high priest; open, let John, son of Nebedæus, enter, the disciple of gluttons, to gorge himself with victims."[1]

Tales of these priests—their luxury, their gluttony, their simony, their avarice, their atheism—long lingered in the hearts of the people. They told how this Issachar, in his fastidious insolence, had had silk gloves made to prevent the soiling of his hands while he sacrificed; of the calves which John, son of Nebedæus, had devoured, and the tuns of wine which he had drunk; how Martha, daughter of Boethus, had bought the priesthood for her husband Joshua, son of Gamala, for two bushels of gold denarii, and had carpets spread from her house to the Temple when she went to see him sacrifice; how the house of Hanan deliberately raised the price of doves, in order to make gain out of the poor, till they were liberated from this tyranny by Gamaliel, the grandson of Hillel; how Eliezer Ben Charsom went to the Temple in a robe which had cost 20,000 minæ, and which was so transparent that the other priests forbade him to wear it.[2] Even Josephus bears witness to the ruthless extortion and cruelty with which they defrauded the inferior priests of their dues

[1] Pesachim, *l. c.*, and Kerithoth, 28, *a*.

[2] Yoma, 35, *b*. See Raphall, *Hist. of Jews*, ii. 370; Grätz, *Gesch. de Juden*, iii. 321; Derenbourg, *Palest.* p. 233, *seqq.*, and my *Life of Christ*, ii. 330—342, where the original references are given.

until they were almost reduced to the verge of starvation.[1] In the section which follows his account of the murder of James, he says that the greedy procurator Albinus cultivated the friendship of Joshua, the high priest, and the other chief priests, and joined with them in robbing the threshing-floors by violence, and that for this reason some of the priests died from inability to recover the tithes which were their sole means of sustenance.

But, while he thus alluded to the state of things in Jerusalem, there can be no doubt that St. James mainly intended to address Christians. Otherwise he would have added some explanation of his simple title, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."[2] Nor could he otherwise have said, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons;"[3] nor again, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."[4] How is it, then, that the Epistle contains none of the rich and advanced Christology of many other Epistles? that the allusions to *specific* Christian doctrine and motive are so rare? How is it that the word "gospel" does not once occur in it? that Christianity is still viewed under the aspect of Law, though truly of an idealised and royal Law? that the general tone of appeal is much more like that of John the Baptist than that of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John? How is it that next to the moral parts

[1] Jos. *Antt.* xx. 8, § 8; 9, § 2. [2] i. 1. [3] ii. 1.

[4] v. 7. See other distinctively Christian allusions in i. 18: "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth;" ii. 7: "Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?" v. 6: "Ye condemned and killed the Just;" v. 14: "Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

of the Sermon on the Mount, St. James is most frequent in his references to books of apocryphal wisdom, written by unconverted Jews? How is it that there are whole sections which might have been almost written by an Epictetus or a Marcus Aurelius? I think that the reason, and the only reason, which can be given, is that while he is *writing* in the first instance to Christians, he is *thinking* to a great extent of Jews. The Christians were few, the Jews many. He has begun by saying that he is writing to the Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion, and he meant his letter to be delivered primarily to the Christians among them. But the Christians whom he has in view were *also* Jews. He does not even allude to the Gentiles. The converts whom he addresses had never thought of deserting the ceremonies, or abandoning what they imagined to be the exclusive privileges of the chosen seed.[1] And he was himself a Jew, living among Jews, and living in all respects as a Jew of the strictest orthodoxy, reverenced even by many who regarded his belief in Christ as a mere aberration—a mere excrescence on his Judaic devotion. It was from Jews, not from Christians,—it was because of accuracy in Jewish observances, not for strictness of Christian morality,—that he had received the surname of "the Just." Let it be borne in mind that, alike amid Jews and Gentiles, the distinction between the Jew and the Christian was infinitely less wide in the first generation after Christ's death than it afterwards became. St. Paul, even after he had written the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, did not hesitate

[1] We have observed the same phenomena of a sort of dual consciousness as to the readers whom he is addressing in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. See *Life and Work of St. Paul*, ii. 168, 169.

to exclaim before the assembled Sanhedrin, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees," and to reduce the whole question between him and them to a question of believing in the Resurrection. As a Nazarite, as an heir of David, as having priestly blood in his veins, as one whose faithfulness was known to all the dwellers in Jerusalem, and to all who visited it, as a Jew who walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Law blameless, James might well consider it his duty to address words of warning and exhortation, primarily indeed to the Christian Churches of Judæa, but through them to all his countrymen. To him the Church is still not only the Ecclesia (v. 14), but the Synagogue (ii. 2)—a word which even the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems purposely to avoid, but which was used *exclusively* by the Ebionites.[1] When alluding to the object of faith, he speaks not of Christ, but of "One God" (ii. 19). He warns against swearing by the heaven and by the earth (v. 12), which we know from the Gospels (Matt. v. 33) to have been common formulæ of Jewish adjuration. He saw in Jews the catechumens of Christianity, and in Christians the ideal Jews. The fact is, that alike in the real and in the traditional St. James we see the traces of views which distinguished three parties of Jewish Christians in the first century, and which continued to exist in three classes of Jewish Christians in the second. Like St. Paul and like the Nazarenes, he did not insist on the observance of Mosaism by the Gentiles; yet, like the milder Ebionites, he appears to have leaned—or, at any rate, his followers leaned—to the belief that even for Gentiles

[1] Epiphan. *Haer.* xxx. 18.

they might be of great importance; and, like the Essene or ascetic Judaists, he personally adopted the rigid practices which may have been to him a valuable training in self-discipline, but which the Colossian and other heretics regarded as constituting a legal righteousness. To us the name "Jewish Christian" may seem almost an oxymoron — a juxtaposition of contrary terms. We see with St. Paul—whose opinions had been the result of special divine training—that between the bondage of ceremonialism and the freedom of Christianity—between the righteousness of legal ordinances and justification by faith—there is a profound antithesis. But it was impossible that it could wear this aspect to the early Christians. *We* view the matter after nineteen centuries of Christian experience; they were the immediate heirs of nineteen centuries of Jewish history.

But while in the first line of his letter St. James testifies to his own faith, he must have known that his words would be received with respect by genuine Hebrews, and that it would be useless to enforce the lessons which he wished to impress upon *all* his countrymen by appeals distinctively Christian. His whole nation was in a state of wild tumult; swayed by passion and worldliness; indulging in the fierce language of hatred, fanaticism, and conceit; becoming godless in their tone of thought; relying on the orthodoxy of Monotheism; careless and selfish in the duties of life; forgetful of the omnipotence of prayer. And the Christians whom he is addressing, being Jews, participated in these dangers. He wished to make the Christians better Christians, to teach them a truer wisdom, a purer morality. He wished

to make them better Christians by making them better Israelites; and he wished to convert the Israelites into being worthier members of the commonwealth of Israel before he could win them to become heirs of the covenant of the better promise. If we bear these circumstances in mind, if we also remember that his letter is not intended for a dogmatic treatise, but for the moral exhortation of one to whom the Law means the rule of life as Jesus had taught it, we shall be better able to judge of the rashness which has only condemned or slighted this Epistle because it has failed to understand the true purpose of the writer.

Again, to grasp the full meaning of St. James, we must appreciate the passionate earnestness of one whose ideal is too stern to admit of *any* compromise with the aims and pleasures of the world.

i. Critics have spoken of the *Essenism and the Ebionism* of the Epistle. But although "help and mercy" were special duties of the Essene, and though St. James "writes mercy upon his flag," there is no trace that he was an Essene. Doubtless he sympathised with many of the views of that singular body. Any Essene might have spoken just as St. James does about oaths, and riches, and merchandise, and the virtue of silence, and the duty of checking wrath;[1] but so might any Christian who had studied, as St. James had studied, the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. The later Ebionites represented Judaism when it had passed into heresy. The views and tendencies of the early Christians in Jerusalem, before they had been modified by

[1] Comp. Ja. i. 19; ii. 5, 13; iv. 13; v. 12; with Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* II. 8, 6, and Philo, *Quod omnis prob. lib.*, § 12 (Hilgenfeld, *Einleit.* p. 539).

the teachings of experience, were only Ebionite in a sense perfectly innocent. In these views and tendencies St. James shared, but he did not fall into the extravagant exaggeration by which they were subsequently caricatured.

ii. Some, again, have seen in the expressions of St. James an *Orphic colouring;* but of this we require much stronger proof than the phrases "the engrafted word," or "the wheel of being" (iii. 6), even though those phrases may be illustrated by parallels in the writings of Pythagoreans.[1] Undoubtedly, however, we find a peculiarity of the Epistle in the extreme frequency of the parallels between its language and that of other writers. These are so numerous that I have no space to write them out at length, but no careful reader can entirely miss them.[2] They show how strong was the originality which could absorb influences from many different sources, and yet maintain its own perfect independence. In this respect the Epistle of St. James

[1] The hexameter in i. 17 (where the word δώρημα is unknown to the N. T. in this sense), and the expression "Father of lights" have been suspected of being borrowed from Alexandrian sources. For the latter see Dan. viii. 10.

[2] Every chapter will furnish parallels to passages in the *Sermon on the Mount* (see Matt. v. 3, 4, 10—12, 22, 24, 33—37, 48; vi. 14, 15, 19, 24; vii. 1—5, 7—12, 21—23) and the eschatological discourse (Mk. xiii. 7, 9, 29, 32). For the very remarkable and close parallels to the *Book of Ecclesiasticus*, comp. i. 5, 8—12, 13, 19, 23, 25; iii. 5, 6, respectively with Ecclus. xx. 15; xli. 22; i. 28; xv. 11; v. 11; xx. 7; xii. 11; xiv. 23; xxviii. 10, 19 (especially in the Greek). For parallels to the *Book of Wisdom*, comp. Ja. i. 10, 11, 17, 20; ii. 21; iv. 14; v. 1—6, with Wisdom ii. 8; v. 8; vii. 17—20; xii. 16; x. 5; v. 9—14; ii. 1—24. For parallels to the *Book of Proverbs*, comp. i. 5, 6, 12, 19, 21; iii. 5; iv. 6; v. 20, respectively with Prov. iii. 5, 6; xxiii. 34; iii. 11; Eccl. v. 2; Prov. xxx. 12; xvi. 27; iii. 34; x. 12. Many more might be added, but the student who will verify these references for himself will see how fully the points mentioned in the text are proved.

differs remarkably from the Epistle of St. Clemens of Rome. St. James, even while he borrows alike from Jewish prophets and from Alexandrian theosophists, fuses their language into a manifesto of Judaic Christianity by the heat and vehemence of his own individuality. He strikes lightning into all he borrows. St. Clemens is far more passively receptive. He has the amiable and conciliatory catholicity which leads him to adopt the moral teaching of all schools; but he has none of the individual force which might have enabled him to infuse into what he has borrowed an individual force.

iii. The *style* of St. James, as compared with his tone of thought, presents the singular combination of pure, eloquent, and even rhythmical Greek, with the prophetic vehemence and fiery sternness of the Hebrew prophet. The purity of the Greek idiom has been made a ground for doubting the genuineness of the Epistle.[1] But the objection is without weight. Palestine—even Galilee—was in those days bilingual. James had probably spoken Greek from his birth. He would therefore find no difficulty in writing in that language, and his natural aptitude may have given him a better style than that of many of his countrymen.[2] But even if not, what difficulty is there in the supposition that St. James, like St. Peter, employed an "interpreter,"[3] or

[1] *E.g.*, De Wette asks, How could James write such good Greek?

[2] Incomparably better, for instance, than that of St. John in the Apocalypse.

[3] St. Mark and a certain Glaucias are both mentioned as "interpreters" of St. Peter. Of the latter—claimed as an authority by the Basilidians—nothing is known; but St. Mark may have acted as "interpreter" to St. Peter rather when he needed Latin at Rome than when he wrote in Greek.

adopted the common plan of submitting his manuscript to the revision of some accomplished Hellenist? The thoughts, the order of them, and the tone in which they are expressed, are exactly such as we should have expected, from all that we know of the writer. The *form* of expression may easily have been corrected by any literary member of the Church of Jerusalem. But the accent of authority, the noble sternness, the demand for unwavering allegiance to the laws of God—even the poetic parallelisms[1]—are all his own. When Schleiermacher speaks of "much bombast" in the Epistle, and describes the style as being "in part ornate, in part clumsy," it is because he criticises it from a wrong standpoint. It is like Voltaire criticising Æschylus or Shakspeare. It is due to the application of Hellenic canons to Semitic genius. The style of St. James is formed on the Hebrew prophets, as his thoughts are influenced by the Hebrew gnomologists. He has nothing of the Pauline method of dialectic; he is never swept away, like St. Paul, by the tide of his own impassioned feeling. His moral earnestness glows with the steady light of a furnace, never rushes with the uncontrolled force of a conflagration. The groups of thoughts follow each other in distinct sections, which never interlace each other, and have little or no logical connexion or systematic advance. He plunges *in medias res* with each new topic; says first in the plainest and most straightforward manner exactly what he means to say, and enforces it afterwards with strong diction, passionate ejaculations, rapid interrogatives, and graphic similitudes. He generally begins mildly, and with a use of the word "brethren," but as he dwells

[1] Bishop Jebb, *Sacred Literat.* p. 273.

on the point his words seem to grow incandescent with the writer's vehemence.[1] In many respects his style resembles that of a fiery prophetic oration rather than of a letter. The sententious form is the expression of a practical energy which will tolerate no opposition. The changes—often apparently abrupt—from one topic to another; the short sentences, which seem to quiver in the mind of the hearer from the swiftness with which they have been launched forth; the sweeping reproofs, sometimes unconnected by conjunctions,[2] sometimes emphasised by many conjunctions;[3] the manner in which the phrases seem to catch fire as the writer proceeds; the vivid freshness and picturesque energy of the expressions;[4]—all make us fancy that we are listening to some great harangue which has for its theme the rebuke of sin and the exhortation to righteousness, in order to avert the awfulness of some imminent crisis. The power of his style consists in the impression which it leaves of the burning sincerity and lofty character of the author.

iv. For these reasons it is almost impossible to write an *analysis* of the Epistle. The analysis is only a catalogue of the subjects with which it deals.[5] Writing

[1] As specimens of his method in these respects see ii. 1—13; iv. 11, 12.

[2] Asyndeton, or absence of conjunctions, Ja. v. 3—6.

[3] Polysyndeton, or multiplicity of conjunctions, Ja. iv. 13.

[4] What the ancient critics call δεινότης. St. James is a perfect autocrat in the use of words. He abounds in *hapax legomena*, or expressions either not found elsewhere or not in the New Testament. These are mentioned in the notes.

[5] Ewald arranges it in *seven* divisions, followed by *three* shorter paragraphs:—

i. 2—18. On trials.

i. 19—27. How we ought to hear and do God's Word.

ii. 1—13. Right behaviour in general.

ii. 14—26. The relation between Faith and Works.

to those who are suffering trials, he exhorts them to endurance, that they may lack nothing (i. 1—4). But if they lack wisdom, they must ask God for it, and desire it with whole-heartedness (5—8). The enemy of whole-heartedness is often worldly wealth, and he therefore tells them how blessed poverty may be, and how transitory are riches (9—11). Since poverty is in itself a trial, he shows the blessedness of enduring the trials which come from God. But there are trials which, while they come in the semblance of trials from God, have their origin in lust and their end death (12—15). It is only the good and perfect gifts which come from God; above all, the gift of our birth by the Word of Truth (16—18). Let them in meekness and purity live worthily of that Word of Truth (19—21); let them be doers, and not mere hearers of it (22—25); let them learn to distinguish between external service and the true ritual of loving unselfishness (26, 27).

Then passing to some of their special national faults, he first sternly rebukes the respect of persons, which was contrary to Christ's ideal, and a sin against the perfect law of liberty (ii. 1—13). It is, perhaps,

iii. 1—18. Control of the tongue is true wisdom.

iv. 1—12. The evils of strife.

iv. 13—v. 11. Perils of the rich, and duty of endurance with reference to the coming of Christ.

(i.) v. 12. The sinfulness of needless oaths.

(ii.) v. 13—18. The power of prayer, especially in sickness.

(iii.) v. 19, 20. The blessing of converting others.

The reader will perhaps think some of the divisions somewhat artificial, especially as Ewald himself describes them. But there is nothing surprising in the general fact that a Jewish-Christian should arrange his work with some reference to numerical symmetry; and Ewald points out that the number *three* prevails in ii. 19, iii. 15, and the number *seven* in iii. 17.

because he saw the origin of this selfish arrogance and abject servility in the reliance which they placed on a nominal orthodoxy, that he enters into the question about faith and works, to show that the former, in his sense of the word, is dead, and therefore valueless without the latter (14—26).

Then he powerfully warns them against the sins of the tongue in passion and controversy (iii. 1—12); and to show that the loudest and angriest talker is not therefore in the right, he draws a contrast between true and false wisdom (13—18).

The source of the evils on which he has been dwelling is the unbridled lust which springs from worldliness. They need humility, and the determination to fight against sin, and sincere repentance (iv. 1—10), which will show itself in an avoidance of evil speaking (11, 12), and in a deeper sense that their life is wholly in God's disposing hands (13—17).

After this he bursts into a strong denunciation of the rich who live in pride, oppression, and self-indulgence (v. 1—6), while he comforts the poor, and counsels them to patience (7—11). Then he warns against careless oaths (12), gives counsels for the time of sickness (13—15), advises mutual confession of sins (16), dwells once more on the efficacy of prayer, as shown in the example of Elijah (16—20), and ends somewhat abruptly with a weighty declaration of the blessedness of converting others.

v. If it be asked what is the one predominant thought in the Epistle, its one idea and motive, the answer seems to be neither (as some have supposed) the blessedness of enduring temptation—though this is

very prominent in it;[1] nor a polemic against mistaken impressions respecting justification by faith, though that occupies an important section;[2] nor an Ebionising exaltation of the poor over the rich, though the rich are sternly warned;[3] nor a contrast between the friendship of the world and the enmity of God.[4] Each of these topics has its own weight and importance, but to bring any of them into *exclusive* prominence is to confuse the general with the special. "The general object, as is shown again and again, is to impress the conviction that Christian faithfulness must express itself in the energy and action of loving service.[5] "Temptations," indeed, occupy a large share in his thoughts, but he wished his readers to try against them the "expulsive power of good affections." The ritualism of active love and earnestness in prayer are with him the means of perfection.[6]

vi. It is this object which gives to the Epistle its controversial aspect. St. Paul says that a man is justified by faith; St. James, that he is justified by works; but St. James is using the word "faith" from the standpoint of Jewish realism, not of Pauline ideality. With both of these Apostles the Law is an inward, not an outward thing; a principle of liberty, not a

[1] Ja. i. 3 and 4, *ὑπομονή*; 12, *μακάριος ἀνὴρ, ὃς ὑπομένει*; v. 7, *μακροθυμήσατε οὖν, ἀδελφοὶ . . . μακροθυμῶν*; 8, *μακροθυμήσατε καὶ ὑμεῖς*; 10, *ὑπόδειγμα λάβετε . . . τῆς μακροθυμίας*; 11, *ὑπομένοντας*.

[2] ii. 10—26.

[3] ii. 1—7; iv. 1—10; v. 1—6.

[4] iv. 4, 5 (1 J. ii. 15—17), and he opposes special forms of worldliness in i. 2—15; ii. 1—4; iii. 1—18; iv. 13, 14.

[5] i. 4, 22; ii. 14—26; iii. 13—17; iv. 17, &c.

[6] St. James dwells on this word, i. 3, 25; iii. 2; v. 4; "Tout dans l'écriture est l'idéal" (Ad. Monod). He speaks of prayer in i. 5; iv. 2, 3, 8; v. 13—18.

yoke of bondage; a word of truth; a living impulse of fruitful activity implanted in man.[1] Seeing the danger of doctrinal formalism, St. James writes to counteract its unpractical tendencies, and to furnish us —from the standpoint, indeed, of Jewish Christianity, but still of an enlightened, liberal, and spiritualised form of it—the delineation of the Christian as he ought to be, "as a perfect man in the perfection of the Christian life, which can only be properly conceived as a perfect work." And from this point of view his letter was a valuable contribution to the formation of a Catholic Christianity. There is nothing harshly intended in its statement of the counter-aspect of the truth which St. Paul had proclaimed. St. Paul would himself have rebutted the one-sided distortion of his views; and he who opposes one-sided tendencies always does a useful work. It is a duty of Catholic Christianity to adjust one truth with another, and to place apparent contraries in their position of proper equilibrium.[2] It is inevitable—it is even desirable—that men should approach truth from many points of view. We can only hope to gain completeness of vision by combining their separate results. It is certain that we ourselves shall be more inclined, by temperament and training, to dwell on one aspect of truth than we shall on others. Yet it is not therefore necessary that we should become party men. It is possible to insist upon party truths without being tainted by party spirit. There existed at least three marked parties in the early Christian Church — the

[1] λόγος ἔμφυτος. Ja. i. 21.

[2] See the few but weighty remarks of Baur, *Ch. Hist.* pp. 128—130, though he unfortunately denies the genuineness of the Epistle.

parties of Jewish, of Alexandrian, and of Pauline Christianity. There were many Christians who would not identify themselves with any of these parties, but who aimed at being many-sided, conciliatory, catholic. Now St. James stood at the head of the party of Jewish Christians, though his followers thrust him more prominently into this position than he would have himself desired.[1] But if we would see the depth of difference which separates him from the Jewish Christians to whom the party-view was everything, and the common Christianity was, by comparison, as nothing, we shall be able to judge of it by reading his Epistle side by side with the poisonous innuendoes and rancorous calumnies of the pseudo-Clementines. *Their* polemic consisted in secretly maligning the views and character of the Apostle of the Gentiles. The polemic of St. James issued in the delineation of the moral character of a Christian man. The party controversialists only fostered mutual hatred and opposition; St. James drew so noble a picture of Christian faithfulness that, as has well been said, "a Church which lived in sincere accordance with his lessons would in no respect dishonour the Christian name."

In proceeding to examine the Epistle of St. James, we shall do so with deeper interest if we bear in mind that it is yet another appeal of a great Christian writer to Jews and Jewish Christians shortly before the final destruction of their separate nationality. St. Paul had shown them the eternal superiority of the new to the old covenant. St. Peter had shown them how Christianity was the true kingdom, the royal priesthood, the

[1] Acts xv. 24, "to whom we gave no such commandment."

theocratic inheritance. Apollos, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, had furnished them with a masterly proof that Christians had the true priesthood, which could alone admit any man into the heavenly sanctuary. St. James calls them to obey the royal Law, the law of liberty. Thus they had been shown by St. Paul and Apollos that the rejection of Christianity, or apostasy from it, was the rejection of, or apostasy from, grace to sin—from the substance to the shadow. St. Peter had warned them against murmuring and faithless impatience; St. James sternly sets before them the perils of insincerity and double-mindedness. And the common message of all is that Jews who had embraced the faith of Christ should hope and endure, and be faithful unto the end.

vii. In one respect the Epistle is unique. Alone of the twenty Epistles of the New Testament, it begins with no benediction, and ends with no message of peace.[1] We might, perhaps, see in this fact a reflexion of the unbending character of the writer. He was a man who in many respects stood alone, and whose manner it was to say what he had to say without formula or preamble, in the fewest and simplest words. The times demanded sternness and brevity. They resembled the days which had called forth the sixfold woe of Isaiah[2] on greed, and luxury, and unbelief, and pride, and injustice, and the reversal of moral truths; and which had forced him to end those

[1] This might be said also of the First Epistle of St. John; but that Epistle—even if we do not accept the view that it was sent to accompany the Gospel—has no epistolary address, and is partly of the nature of a treatise.

[2] Is. v. 1—30.

woes with the denunciation of terrible retribution. Hollow professions of religion, empty shows and shadows of faith, partiality and respect of persons, slavish idolatry of riches, observance of some of God's commandments, together with open and impious defiance of others; arrogant assumption of the office of religious teaching without due call and authority; encouragement and patronage of those who set themselves up to be spiritual guides; sins of the tongue; evil speaking against man and God; envying and strife; factions and party feuds; wars and fightings; adulteries; pride and revelry; sordid worldliness and presumptuous self-confidence; a Babel-like building up of secular plans and projects, independently of God's will, and against it; vainglorious display of wealth; hard-heartedness towards those by whose industry that wealth is acquired; self-indulgence and sensuality; an obstinate continuance in that temper of unbelief which rejected and crucified Christ; "these," as we see from this Epistle, "were the sins of the last days of Jerusalem; for these she was to be destroyed by God; for these she *was* destroyed; and her children have been scattered abroad, and have now been outcasts for near two thousand years. . . . Amid such circumstances, St. James, the Apostle and Bishop of Jerusalem, wrote this Epistle—an Epistle of warning to Jerusalem—the last warning it received from the Holy Spirit of God. He thus discharged the work of a Hebrew Prophet and of a Christian Apostle. He came forth as a Christian Jeremiah and a Christian Malachi. A Jeremiah in denouncing woe; a Malachi sealing up the roll of Divine prophecy to Jerusalem: and not to Jerusalem only, but to the Jews throughout the world,

who were connected with Jerusalem by religious worship and by personal resort to its great festal anniversaries. The Epistle of St. James is the farewell voice of Hebrew prophecy."[1]

[1] Bishop Wordsworth, whom I quote the more gladly because I dissent widely from his exegetical views.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

"Christianorum omnis religio sine scelere et macula vivere."—LACTANTIUS.

"What a noble man speaks in this Epistle! Deep unbroken patience in suffering! Greatness in poverty! Joy in sorrow! Simplicity, sincerity, firm direct confidence in prayer! . . . How he wants action! Action! not words, not dead faith!"—HERDER.

As we have now learnt all that we can about the author of the Epistle, and the circumstances under which he wrote, we shall be in a better position to understand rightly his solemn teaching.

"JAMES, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,"[1]—such is the title which he assumes, and the only personal word in his entire Epistle.[2] It was a simple title, and yet in his eyes, as in those of the other Apostles, nobler than any other badge which he could adopt, for they all felt that they were "bought with a price." He will not call himself an Apostle,

[1] This and ii. 1 are the only passages in which the names "Jesus" or "Christ" occur, but by no means the only *references* to Him. See *supra*, p. 15. Bengel says that it might have looked like pride if he had seemed to speak too much of Jesus after the flesh. The real solution of the matter lies in the object and character of the Epistle. He does not, indeed, mention Christ in his speech (Acts xv. 14—21); but that was brief and purely special. The wording of ii. 1, and the association of Jesus with God the Father in this verse, clearly shows that to St. James the Lord was not the ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος of the Ebionites; nor would James have called himself "a slave" of any mortal man. See *Christologie*, i. 95.

[2] ὑπὲρ πᾶν δὲ κοσμικὸν ἀξίωμα . . . τὸ δοῦλοι εἶναι Χριστοῦ καλλωπιζόμενοι τοῦτο γνώρισμ. ἑαυτῶν βούλονται ποιεῖσθαι (Œcumen.); Rom. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1, etc.; 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23.

because in the highest technical sense he is not an Apostle, since he is not one of the Twelve.[1] He had no need of any such title to command the attention of Christians, among whom he exercised unquestioned authority, and it was not a title which would be recognised among the unconverted Jews, whom he also desired to address. Nor, again, will he call himself "a brother of the Lord." That was a claim which was thrust into prominence on his behalf by others, but it is not one which he would himself have approved. It reminded him, perhaps painfully, of the wasted opportunities of those years in which he had not believed on Him; nor could he forget with what marked emphasis the Lord Jesus, from the beginning of His public ministry, had set aside as of no spiritual significance the claims of fleshly relationship. Of the Risen, of the glorified, of the Eternal Christ, he was in no sense "the brother," but "the slave."[2] I cannot imagine that he would have listened without indignation to the name conferred on him by the heated partisanship of those who in after days called him "the brother of God." The name would have shocked to its inmost depths the feeling which every Jew imbibed from the earliest training of his childhood respecting the nothingness of man and the awfulness and unapproachable majesty of God. He was, in a secondary and carnal sense, a half-brother of Jesus in His earthly humiliation; but he must have learnt from the words of the Lord Himself that this kinsmanship in the flesh could

[1] "The thirteen Apostles were appointed by the Lord; St. James, St. Clemens, and others by the Apostles" (*post. Constt.* ii. 55).

[2] Rom. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1; Jude 1.

hardly redeem from unconscious blasphemy a name so confusing, so unwarrantable, and so unscriptural, as "brother of God." In the only sense in which the word could have any meaning, every faithful Christian was in all respects as much "a brother of God" as he. That he was, in common parlance, "a brother of Him who was called the Christ," there was no need for him to mention. It was a fact known to every Jew of the Dispersion who visited Jerusalem at the yearly feasts, and it even stands as a description of St. James on the indifferent page of the Jewish historian.

"To the twelve tribes that are in the Dispersion,[1] giving them joy."[2] The ten tribes had, as a body, been indistinguishably lost among the nations into whose countries they had been transplanted;[3] but there were probably some communities, and certainly many families, which had preserved their genealogy, and still took pride in the thought that they belonged to this or that tribe of ancient Israel.[4] And the nation never lost the sense of its ideal unity. The number "twelve" was to the Jews a symbolic number.

[1] See *Life and Work of St. Paul*, i. 115 *seq.* The word *Diaspora* occurs in John vii. 35; 1 Pet. i. 1; and in the LXX. of Ps. cxlvi. 2; Deut. xxviii. 25.

[2] See *infra*, p. 36.

[3] Dean Plumptre points out that the first appearance of the fiction that the Ten Tribes were somewhere preserved as one body is in 2 Esdr. xiii. 39—47, where the author says that, in the determination to keep their own statutes, "they took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a farther country, where never mankind dwelt." The Talmud recognises their entire dispersion. Thus Rabbi Ashe said, "If a Gentile should betroth a Jewess, the betrothal may not now be invalid, *for he may be a descendant of one of the Ten Tribes*, and so of the seed of Israel" (Yevamoth, f. 16, *b*). Again, "the Ten Tribes will never be restored (Deut. xxviii. 25) . . . so says R. Akhiva" (Sanhedrin, f. 110, *b*).

[4] *E.g.*, the widow Anna, who was of the tribe of Asher.

"*Three*" was to them the sacred number, the number of Spirit, the number of the life that is in God; "*four*" was the number which symbolised Divine Providence; "*twelve*" (4 × 3) was the number of Heavenly completeness, the number of the consummation of the Kingdom of God.[1] Hence St. Paul also speaks of "the *dodekaphulon*,"[2] our "twelve-tribed nation," and St. John, in the Apocalypse, echoes in various forms[3] the conception of the Elect of the Twelve Tribes in Heaven which had been involved in the promise of Christ, "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel."[4]

It is a curious and undesigned coincidence that this letter, and the encyclical letter from the Church of Jerusalem, of which St. James was the main author, are the only two Christian letters in the New Testament which begin with the greeting "giving them joy."[5] It was distinctively the Greek salutation. The Jewish was *Shalóm*—"Peace."[6] St. Paul, wishing to combine in his salutations all that was most blessed alike in ethnic and in spiritual life, combines the two national methods of salutation in his χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη, "grace and peace," which in his pastoral Epistles is tenderly amplified into "grace, mercy, and peace."

[1] See Herzog, *Real. Encycl.*, *s. v. Zahlen*; Lange, *Apocalypse*, Introd., § 6, a.

[2] Acts xxvi. 7.

[3] 12 tribes; 24 elders; 12,000 of each tribe; 144,000 of the followers of the Lamb, etc. The latter number is so far from being narrowly restrictive, that it stands for a number ideally complete.

[4] Matt. xix. 28; Rev. vii. 5—8.

[5] Acts xv. 23, χαίρειν. The word also occurs in the Greek letter of Claudius Lysias to Felix (Acts xxiii. 26), and in that of Antiochus in 2 Macc. ix. 19. Its recurrence here is one of the undesigned coincidences between this letter and the account given of St. James in the Acts.

[6] Is. xlviii. 22; lvii. 21, where *Shalom* is rendered χαίρειν by the LXX.

I have here rendered the word by "giving them joy"[1] because it forms the transition to the opening passage, "My brethren, count it all joy." This mode of transition by the repetition of a word—which is technically known as *duadiplosis*—is very characteristic of this Epistle, and forms, in fact, the writer's ordinary method of passing from one paragraph to another.[2] The remainder of the chapter—the phraseology of which I will endeavour to elucidate in the notes, and the general bearing in the text—runs as follows:—

"Count it all joy,[3] my brethren,[4] when ye suddenly fall into varied temptations,[5] recognising that the testing of your faith[6] works endurance; but let endurance have a perfect work,[7] that ye may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing[8] (i. 2—4).

"But if any one of you lacks wisdom,[9] let him ask from God, who

[1] Comp. 2 John 10, 11. The absence of any opening benediction may be due to the *general* character of the letter.

[2] Thus we have ver. 1, χαίρειν; ver. 2, χάραν; ὑπομονήν, ver. 3, ἡ δὲ ὑπομονή; ver. 4, λειπόμενοι, ver. 5, εἰ δέ τις λείπεται; ver. 6, μηδὲν διακρινόμενος ὁ γὰρ διακρινόμενος, &c.; and so throughout.

[3] πᾶσαν χαράν, *merum gaudium, eitel Freude.* Comp. Luke vi. 22, 23; Acts v. 41; Col. i. 24.

[4] The perpetual recurrence of this word shows that the wounds which St. James inflicts are meant to be the faithful wounds of a friend.

[5] περιπέσητε of sudden accidents, as λῃσταῖς περιέπεσεν, Luke x. 30; περιπεσόντες δὲ εἰς τόπον διθάλασσον. The word ποίκιλος literally means "many-coloured." Comp. ἐπιθυμίαις ποικίλαις, 1 Tim. iii. 6. The word "temptations" includes all forms of trial: Luke xxii. 28; Acts xx. 19. Persecution was rife at this time: 1 Thess. ii. 14; Heb. xi. 32, 33.

[6] Verse 3, τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως. St. Peter (1 Pet. i. 7) uses the same phrase, and the coincidence can hardly be accidental.

[7] Matt. xxiv. 13—ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος σωθήσεται.

[8] "The work of God," says Alford, "in a man *is* the man." The word τέλειος is a favourite one with St. James (i. 3, 4, 17, 25; iii. 2), borrowed, doubtless, from the words of our Lord (Matt. v. 48; xix. 21). Ὁλόκληρος is also used by St. Paul (1 Thess. v. 28), and means "well regulated in every part" (Acts iii. 16). Philo and Josephus use it for *unblemished* sacrificial victims.

[9] "Wisdom" with St. James is evidently that practical wisdom which surpasses knowledge (γνῶσις), because it not only knows truth, but acts

giveth to all simply[1] and upbraideth not,[2] and it shall be given him[3] (5).

"But let him ask in faith,[4] nothing doubting,[5] for he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea wind-driven[6] and tossed about. For let not that person think that he shall receive anything[7] from the Lord—a double-minded man,[8] unsettled in all his ways[9] (6—8).

upon that knowledge (*Etym. Magn.*). Comp. iii. 15—17; 1 Cor. xii. 8; Col. ii. 3.

[1] ἁπλῶς. So in Rom. xii. 8 we are bidden to grow in "simplicity."

[2] The meaning of this expression is best seen from Ecclus. xx. 15, where it is said of the fool, "He giveth little, and upbraideth much; he openeth his mouth like a crier; to-day he lendeth, and to-morrow he will ask. Such an one is to be hated of God and man;" Id. xli. 22, "After thou hast given, upbraid not" (μὴ ὀνείδιζε). The "*exprobratio beneficii*" (Ter. *Andr.* i. 1)—*i.e.*, the casting in the teeth of others what we have done for them—is a vice of all ages.

[3] See 1 Kings iii. 11, 12, "Because thou hast asked this thing (wisdom), behold, I have done according to thy word," Luke xi. 13; Ecclus. vii. 10, "Be not fainthearted when thou makest thy prayer." We see here that by "faith" St. James means undivided confidence in God.

[4] See v. 15; Matt. xxi. 22, "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive."

[5] Διακρινόμενος, Matt. xxi. 21, "If ye have faith and doubt not (μὴ διακριθῆτε), ye shall do not only the miracle of the fig-tree, but," &c.; Rom. iv. 20, Abraham οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ. "When faith says 'yes' and unbelief says 'no,'" says Huther, "to doubt (διακρίνεσθαι) is the union of 'yes' and 'no,' but so that 'no' is the weightier. The deep-lying ground of it is pride." Dean Plumptre quotes from Tennyson—

> "Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers,
> Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all."

[6] ἀνεμιζομένῳ καὶ ῥιπιζομένῳ. The words occur here only, and κλύδων ("billow") only in Luke viii. 24; but we have the metaphor in Is. lvii. 20; Eph. iv. 14. The words well express the state of tumultuous excitement which preceded the Jewish War.

[7] That is, "any special answer to prayer."

[8] Ἀνὴρ δίψυχος. "The man who has two souls in conflict with each other." This striking expression occurs only at iv. 8. Rabbi Tanchum (*f.* 84) on Deut. xxvi. 17 gives a close parallel, "Let not those who pray have two hearts, one directed to God, one to something else." Comp. 1 Kings xviii. 21; Ps. xii. 2, "a double heart" (*lit.* "a heart and a heart"); Ecclus. i. 28, "Come not unto the Lord with a double heart;" Is. ii. 12, "Woe be to . . . the sinner that *goeth two ways*;" Matt. vi. 24, "No man can serve two masters." The passage is imitated in "The Shepherd of Hermas" (*Mandat.* ix.).

[9] Ἀκατάστατος. A classical expression (again) found only in St. James

"But let the humble brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation,[1] because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.[2] For the sun ariseth with the burning wind, and drieth the grass, and its flower fadeth away, and the beauty of its aspect perisheth;[3] so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings[4] (9—11).

"Blessed is the man[5] who endureth temptation, for when he has been approved he shall receive the garland of the life[6] which He promised[7] to those who love Him[8] (12).

"Let no one who is being tempted say, 'I am being tempted from God.' For God is out of the sphere of evils,[9] and Himself

(iii. 8). Comp. Is. liv. 11, "tossed with tempest;" Ἀκαταστασία, iii. 16; Luke xxi. 9; 1 Cor. xiv. 33, &c. It is one who "never continueth in one stay" (Job xiv. 2).

[1] For the different views taken of this verse see *infra*, p. 43. Καυχᾶσθαι is literally "to boast." Rom. ii. 17, &c.

[2] For the metaphor, specially suitable to the brief life of flowers in the scorching heat of Palestine, see Is. xl. 6, 7; Ps. ciii. 15; Job. xiv. 2; 1 Pet. i. 24; Wisd. ii. 12, "Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered;" riches are no "unwithering inheritance" (1 Pet. i. 4) as the kingdom of God is.

[3] The aorist tenses show us the whole story, so to speak. The *kausôn* is usually taken to mean the *kadîm*, or simoom, as in Jonah iv. 8; the "east wind" of Ezek. xvii. 10; xix. 12; "the wind of the Lord from the wilderness" of Hos. xiii. 15; but may mean merely "scorching heat;" Matt. xx. 12; Luke xii. 55.

[4] Μαρανθήσεται only in Wisd. ii. 8 and Job xv. 30 (LXX.). πορείαις is the best-supported reading, and alludes, perhaps, to travels for purposes of gain, &c. (iv. 13). (A, πορίαις, "gettings.")

[5] ἀνὴρ—"non mollis nec effeminatus sed *vir*" (Thos. Aquin.).

[6] There is no special reference to athletes (Ps. xxi. 3; Rev. ii. 10; Wisd. v. 16).

[7] The "He" (as in ℵ, A, B) is more emphatic than if he had inserted "the Lord," and seems to show how early the Talmudic method of reference had begun.

[8] Amor parit patientiam (Bengel).

[9] ἀπείραστος occurs here only. It means (1) "untempted," and (2) "one who does not tempt." Luther follows the Vulgate in understanding it to mean "does not try evil men" (*intentator malorum est*), or "is not a tempter of yvell things" (Wiclif); but this St. James has said already. It seems to mean "has nothing to do with evil things," and therefore cannot tempt men to evil. Œcumenius quotes a heathen saying, "The Divine neither suffers troubles nor causes them to others." "Why, then, is it said that God did tempt Abraham in Gen. xix. 3? That means that

tempteth no one, but each is ever tempted when he is being drawn forth[1] and enticed by his own desire.[2] Then the desire, having conceived, bears sin; but sin, when full grown, brings forth death (13—15).[3]

"Be not deceived, my brethren beloved. Every good giving and every perfect gift[4] is from above, descending from the Father of the Lights,[5] with whom there is no varying nor shadow of turning.[6]

He tried Abraham, not from evil motives to an evil end, but from good motives to a good end" (Aug.).

[1] Prov. xxx. 13 (LXX.). The word may be used of "dragging a prey to land," as in Hdt. ii. 76, and so we might take the metaphor to be one from fishing. The word δελεαζόμενος may also mean "enticing with a bait," as in 2 Pet. ii. 14, 18; Xen. *Mem.* ii. 1, § 6. But the further expansion of the metaphor shows that he is thinking of the enticement of the harlot Sense (Prov. vii. 16—23), to which in classical and Hellenistic usage the words are equally applicable (Hom. *Od.* π. 294; Arist. *Polit.* v. 10; *Testam. XII. Patriarch.* p. 702); and especially Plutarch's *De Ser. Num. Vindict.*; "the sweetness of desire, like a bait (δέλεαρ), entices (ἐξέλκει) men."

[2] "No man taketh harm but by himself;" "passion becomes to each his own God;" "*sibi cuique Deus fit dira cupido*" (Virg. *Æn.* ix. 185).

[3] Milton expands the metaphor into an allegory in *Par. Lost*, ii. 745—814. Lange points out the varying expressions of the New Testament: "Sin brings forth death" (James); "death is the wages of sin" (Paul); "sin is death" (John).

[4] This forms in the original a perfect hexameter, except that the last syllable of δόσις is lengthened—

πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον.

On these metrical phrases see note on Heb. xii. 14. δώρημα only occurs in Rom. v. 16. "From above" (John iii. 3, 7, 31; xix. 11). Bishop Andrewes, in two sermons on this text, says the δόσις ἀγαθὴ refers to the gifts of eternal life; the δώρημα τέλειον the treasures laid up for us in eternity.

[5] By "the lights" is meant probably "the heavenly bodies," as in Ps. cxxxvi. 7; Jer. ïv. 23, called in Gen i. 14 φωστῆρες, which is metaphorically applied to Christians (John v. 35; Phil. ii. 15). The "Father" then means the Creator (comp. Job xxxviii. 28, "Hath the rain a father?"). Some explain it of angels and spirits, and of Him who is the "Light of the world" (John ix. 5). But the question is not what meaning the words may be made to include, but what meaning they originally had.

[6] The words are curious—παραλλαγὴ ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα. The first word is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament (but see 2 Kings ix. 20, LXX.), and has been understood to be a technical term of astronomy, like *parallax*. But in Epictet. i. 14 it merely means "change," even in an

Because He willed it, He brought us forth by the word of truth that we might be in some sense[1] a first fruit of His creatures[2] (16—18).

"Ye know,[3] my brethren beloved. But let everyone be swift to listening, slow to speaking,[4] slow to wrath. For the wrath of a man (ἀνδρὸς) worketh not the righteousness of God. Therefore laying aside all filthiness and superfluity of malice, receive in meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls.[5] But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not hearers only, misleading yourselves (Col. ii. 4; Luke xi. 28). For if any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, this person is like a man[6] contemplating the face of his birth in a mirror. For he contemplated himself, and has gone away,[7] and immediately forgot what kind of person he was. But he who has stooped down to gaze[8] into a perfect law, the law of

astronomical sentence; and Plotinus speaks of "a change (παραλλαγὴ) of days to nights." It seems, however, to have a semi-technical connexion with astronomy. Ἀποσκίασμα is also a *hapax legomenon*, and τροπαὶ ἡλίου means "the solstices" (see Job xxxviii. 33). Here, however, there seems to be a general allusion to the changes and revolutions of the sun, moon, and stars (Wisd. vii. 17—19), as compared with the sun which never sets. Comp. 1 John i. 5, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" Ps. cxxxix. 11.

[1] ἀπαρχήν. The τινα shows that he is using a new metaphor.

[2] On the great theological importance of this verse—all the more noticeable because the Epistle is predominantly practical—see *infra*, p. 48.

[3] The true reading seems to be ἴστε, A, B, C (Heb. xii. 17; Eph. v. 5). Its very abruptness probably caused the variations of the MSS.

[4] Ecclus. v. 11: "Be swift to hear . . . . and with patience give answer;" "Thou hast two ears and one mouth" (Rückert). Œcumenius here quotes the proverb that "no one ever repented of having been silent," and every one will be reminded of the proverb, "Speech is silvern, Silence is golden" (Prov. xiii. 3, &c.; Eccl. v. 2)—Philo has the phrase, "slow to benefit, swift to injure." The Jews were ever "slow to hear" (Heb. v. 11; x. 25).

[5] *It* is able, for it is a power of God (Rom. i. 16). Without it they are unable, whether by outward works (as Pharisees said) or by determination of will (as Sadducees said) to be saved. On ἔμφυτος, see p. 49.

[6] ἀνδρί. Some have referred the term to the comparative carelessness of *men* in looking at mirrors (1 Cor. xiii. 12; Wisd. vii. 26; Ecclus. xii. 12), but it is doubtful whether St. James intends any special distinctiveness in the word (see vers. 8—12).

[7] ἀπέληλυθεν, *perf.* The tenses make the image more graphic.

[8] The true meaning of the word will be seen by a reference to Luke xxiv. 12—"Stooping down and looking in"; Ecclus. xiv. 23; John xx. 5, 11; 1 Pet. i. 12 (see the note on that verse). Doubtless St. James thought,

liberty,[1] and has stayed to gaze,[2] proving himself not a hearer who forgets, but a doer who works, he shall be blessed in his doing[3] (19—25).

"If any one fancies that he is 'religious'[4] while he is not bridling his tongue (iii. 2, 3), but is deceiving his own heart, this man's religious service is profitless. A religious service pure and undefiled[5] before our God and Father is this—to take care of orphans and widows in their affliction (Ex. xxii. 22—24; Acts vi. 1), to keep himself unspotted from the world"[6] (26, 27).

in passing, of the Cherubim bending down over the Ark as though to gaze continually on the revelation of God's will in the moral law. See on this word Coleridge (*Aids to Reflection*, p. 15), "A more happy and forcible word could not have been chosen to express the nature and ultimate object of reflection."

[1] "Legum servi sumus ut liberi esse possimus" (Cic.). We have seen already that St. James's ideal of the Law is not that of Moses (Acts xv. 10; Gal. v. 1, but comp. Ps. xix. 8--11), but that of the Sermon on the Mount (ii. 8; v. 12; John viii. 32), the law of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 2), the law of faith (Rom. iii. 27).

[2] Notice the antithesis, *παρακύψας, παραμείνας, οὐκ ἀκροατὴς ἐπιλησμοσύνης*, as against *κατενόησεν, ἀπελήλυθεν, ἐπελάθετο*.

[3] "Ut ipsa actio sit beatitudo" (Schneckenburger).

[4] *Θρησκεία* means ritual service, external observance; "gay *religions*, full of pomp and gold" (Acts xxvi. 5), which (as we see from Col. ii. 18, the only other place where the word occurs in the New Testament) have a perpetual tendency to degenerate into superfluous and self-satisfying human ordinances (*ἐθελοθρησκεία*), and even, to use the bold coinage of a later writer, *ἐθελοπεριτομὴ θρησκείας*. It is the peril and disease of the externally virtuous—vice corrupting virtue itself into pride and intolerance. Hence the *θρῆσκος* is one who plumes himself on his outward service. This paragraph illustrates the "slowness to speak," as the last did the "swiftness to hear." Obtrusiveness in talk is a natural consequence of a spurious religion.

[5] The Jewish notion of defilement was very different (John xviii. 28; Lev. v. 3, and *passim*; comp. Ecclus. xxxv. 14). For "the fatherless and widows" (where "respect of persons" is also alluded to), and for the general thought, compare Mark vii. 20—23; Luke xi. 40.

[6] St. James would feel this duty all the more keenly, and would feel that *this*, and not the performance of outward religious duties was what God really desired, because the day had been when he too was of the world, for which reason the world which hated Christ had not hated him (John vii. 7). By "the world" is here meant everything in the world, and in the worldly life which tempts to sin (1 Tim. vi. 14). With this thought compare John xvii. 15; 1 Tim. v. 22. With the general thought of the

I have broken the chapter into brief sections to indicate as far as possible the transitions of thought. Special difficulties of expression are, I hope, sufficiently elucidated in the appended notes, and the very literal translation will show what I believe to be the best reading and construction. But there are one or two general points in the chapter which require notice.

i. It will be observed that St. James begins at once with the subject of temptation, using the word in its broadest sense of all forms of trial. It includes both outward persecution—from which the Churches of scattered Jews, whether converted or unconverted, were always liable, from the common hatred which Pagans felt for them—and those inward temptations which are often closely connected with outward circumstances. St. James shows his readers how to turn these temptations into blessings, by making them a source of patient endurance, and so using them as the fire which purges and tests the fine gold. For the Christian should aim at such perfection [1] (i. 2—4).

ii. Now for perfection he needs wisdom [2] most of all; and if he lacks this wisdom he has only to ask for it from One whose gifts are absolute and gracious (i. 5).

iii. Yet it is useless to ask without faith in Him to

paragraph comp. Ecclus. xxxv. 2: "He that requiteth a good turn, offereth fine flour; and he that giveth alms, sacrificeth praise." The same thought is found both in Scripture (Deut. x. 12; Ps. xl. 7; xxi. 17; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Mic. vi. 6—9; Hos. vi. 6; xii. 6, &c.) and in heathen writers.

[1] The Christian aims at "endurance," not at "apathy," as the Stoic did. His endurance has "a sublimer origin, a milder character, a greater duration, a more glorious fruit" (Van Oosterzee).

[2] The history of the next few years shows how deeply the Jews needed this wisdom. "Wisdom is justified of her children" (Matt. xi. 19);—"and she abode not at Jerusalem, but with the Christians who fled in time to Pella."

whom the petition is addressed, and without faith that it will be granted. Such faithless prayers can only arise from a wavering disposition, a want of stability, a want of whole-heartedness, a dualism of life and aim (i. 6—8).

iv. Then comes an apparently sudden transition of exhortation to rich and poor.[1] That the transition was not so sudden in the mind of the writer is shown by his connecting particle. "The man of two souls," he says, "is restless in all his ways; *but* let the humble brother rejoice." The unexpressed connexion seems to be, "Now, what is the cause of this spiritual distraction and instability? Does it not arise from worldliness? Well, *ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* If, then, any brother be poor and humble, let him rejoice in his exaltation. For if he take it rightly his earthly humiliation is his true dignity. He is enjoying the beatitude of poverty. It is something like the thought expressed so tersely by our great philosopher,[2] "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, Adversity is the blessing of the New" (i. 9).

v. "But the rich," he adds, "in his humiliation." The meaning of these words is not clear. It has even been supposed by some that the words "rich" and "poor" are used in this Epistle in a metaphorical sense.[3]

[1] So in Shemoth Rabba (§ 31, *f.* 129) we find, "Blessed is the man who stands in his *temptation*; for there is no man whom God does not *try*. He *tries the rich*, to see if they will open their hands to the poor; He *tries the poor*, to see if they will not murmur," &c.

[2] Lord Bacon.

[3] Lange thinks that by "the brethren of low degree" are meant Jews and Jewish Christians, and by the rich the Gentiles; for, he says, the rich Jews have always been kind to the poor. I think I have already met this difficulty. It is surely extravagant to say that "the rich man with a gold ring and splendid garment denotes the proud Ebionitish Jewish

Another discussion turns on the question whether by "the rich" we are here to understand rich Christians, or rich Jews and Gentiles. I feel convinced that the words are to be understood in their primary meaning. As I have already explained, St. James is not thinking of Gentiles at all, and is drawing no marked distinction between Jews and Christians. A further question is, are we to understand this phrase hortatively in the sense of "but let the rich man boast in his humiliation," or as a contrast, "but the rich man rejoices or glories in that which is in reality his humiliation"?[1] In the one case it is an exhortation to the rich man as to what he *ought* to do; in the other a censure upon him for what he *does*. Neither interpretation is without difficulty, but on the whole the meaning seems to be that worldliness, with the temptations which it brings, is full of dangers. Poverty and riches stand in God's estimation in reverse positions. Humble poverty is true wealth. Pampered wealth is real poverty.[2] Let the poor brother glory in the beatitude of poverty; it is a gift of God. The rich brother, then, is worse off, is in a worse position, than he—his riches are his humiliation in the heavenly order, for they are a temptation to which he is only too liable to succumb; they tend to make him more of a worldling, less of a Christian. Such views belong to the so-called Ebionitism of St. James. But the opinions of the Ebionites were due to the falsehood

Christian *parading his ring of the Jewish Covenant* (!), while the poor man, with a vile garment, describes the Gentile Christian" (*Introd.* p. 27). This is to introduce into New Testament exegesis fancies borrowed from Lessing and Swift.

[1] This would resemble Phil. iii. 19, "whose glory is in their shame." Compare the saying of Pascal about man—"Gloire et rebut de l'Univers, s'il se vante, je l'abaisse; s'il s'abaisse, je le vante."

[2] Matt. v. 3.

of extremes. Neither is wealth in itself a sin, nor poverty in itself a virtue. They are conditions of life in which God has placed us, each liable to its own, and each to *different* temptations. But as regards those days—perhaps as regards all periods—riches were liable to severer temptations than poverty. In the teaching of St. James we recognise, not the exaggerations of Ebionitism, but the impression left by the sermons and parables of Christ[1] (i. 10).

vi. And the reason why the rich brother should glory in the humiliation which the world regards as his enviable superiority is that reason which Isaiah had so exquisitely expressed, and to which St. Peter also refers.[2] It is the transitoriness of riches.[3] Often, even in this brief life, they make themselves wings and fly away. But they must always pass away with the fading flower of life; not even the poorest fragment of them can be held by the relaxing hand of death. Is that a condition to glory in, which Christ showed to be surrounded with peril, and which must soon become like a withered blossom in a dead man's hand? (i. 11).

vii. But whether our trial comes in the form of wealth or of poverty it becomes a beatitude if it works in us the spirit of patient endurance. And here it is necessary for St. James to introduce a strong caution.

[1] Matt. xxiii. 12; Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14. The commoner view of the clause is "Let the rich man rejoice *when he is humiliated* by the "spoiling of his goods" (Heb. x. 34). But (1) this loss of wealth happens only to a few. (2) He is throughout addressing "rich men," who are in the full flower of their prosperity.

[2] Is. xl. 6; 1 Pet. i. 24 (comp. Matt. vi. 30; xiii. 26).

[3] Some refer the passage chiefly to reverses in life. "The rich man, overtaken by judgment, perishes in the midst of his doings and pursuits, as the flower, in the midst of its blessings, falls a victim to the scorching heat of the sun" (Huther).

The word which he has used for temptation is capable of two meanings—trial in the sense of a difficult and painful test (*adversa pati*); and trial in the sense of strong impulse to sin (*malis ad defectionem sollicitari*). In the first sense it comes from God; it is a part of His providential ordering of our lives. In the second sense it by no means comes from God.[1] When a man pleads, as men have so often done, that "God has made them so;"[2] or that "the flesh is weak,"[3] or that "God for a moment deserted them;"[3] when they say that they have done wrong because they could not do otherwise;[4] when they contend that each man is practically no better than an automaton, and that his actions are the inevitable—and therefore irresponsible—result of the conditions by which he is surrounded—they are transferring to God the blame of their misdoings. "The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart

[1] The history of temptation, says Bede, is (1) Suggestion; (2) Delight; (3) Consent. 'Suggestion is of the enemy, delight and consent from our own frailty. If the birth of a wrong action follows the delight of the heart, the enemy leaves us as a victor, and we are liable to death." "Lust is the mother of sin, sin the mother of death, the sinner the parent of both" (Macknight).

[2] St. Paul deals with this question—"Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?" (Rom. ix. 19.)

[3] "Seems there any recess? It is we forsake Him; not He us (Jer. ii. 17)" (Bishop Andrewes).

[4] The unhappy Henry II., shortly before his death, passionately exclaimed to God, "Since Thou hast taken from me the town I loved best . . . I will have my revenge on Thee too. I will rob Thee of that thing Thou lovest most in me" (see Green's *Hist. of Engl.* I. p. 181). There can be little doubt that St. James had in his mind a magnificent passage of Ecclus. xv. 11—17, "*Say not thou, 'It is through the Lord that I fell away:'* for thou oughtest not to do the things that He hateth. Say not thou 'He hath caused me to err,' for He hath no need of the sinful man. . . . He hath set fire and water before thee: stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt. Before man is life and death, and whether him liketh, shall be given him."

fretteth against the Lord."[1] The doctrine of fatalism is but a poor and false excuse for crime.[2] When passively accepted it paralyses every nerve of moral effort; when it takes the form of materialism, and poses as the final result of science, it lays the axe at the root of every motive by which men rise to the dignity of free and moral beings. Men become the children of God by obedience to His laws, resulting not from necessity, but choice. And so St. James gives the true genesis of sin. It springs from lust—desire—the *yetser-ha-râ*, or evil impulse, which plays so large a part in later Jewish literature. This is to each soul the harlot-temptress which draws him forth from the safe shelter of innocence, entices him, and bears the evil offspring of committed sin. But the bad genealogy ends not there. Sin, too, grows to maturity, and the offspring of her incestuous union is death (i. 12—15).

viii. No, God is not the author of evil; it is only every *good* gift which comes from Him. "God is always in the meridian."[3] He dwells in the φῶς ἀνέσπερον, in the light whereof there is no eventide, the sun whereof knows no tropic. No darkness can flow from the fountain of that unchanging Sun, which is not liable to the parallax and eclipses of the heavenly bodies which He has made.[4] And then, in one singularly pregnant clause which—although in this respect

[1] Prov. xix. 3.

[2] It was familiar to St. James, for, as Josephus says, it was a doctrine of the Pharisees (*Antt.* xviii. 1, § 3; *B. J.* ii. 8, § 14).

[3] Wetstein.

[4] "Though the lights of heaven have their parallaxes, yea 'the angels of heaven He found not steadfastness in them' (Job iv. 18); yet for God, He is subject to none of them. He is '*Ego sum qui sum*' (Ex. iii. 14), that is, saith Malachi, '*Ego Deus et non mutor* (Mal. iii. 6). We are not what we were awhile since, what we shall be awhile after, scarce what we are; for every moment makes us vary. With God it is nothing so. He

it stands somewhat isolated — shows how little the practical tendency of the author was dissevered from deep dogmatic insight, he tells us of God's *most* perfect gift to us. He tells us that we need a new life; that God by one great act has bestowed it upon us; that this act sprang from His own free will and choice;[1] that the instrument of this new birth was the word of truth,[2] the Divine revelation of God to man, which, of course, requires faith in them that hear it; that the result of this new birth is our dedication as "the first fruits of a sacrificial gift"[3] which shall only be completed with the offering up of all God's creatures. Thus in one brief sentence he concentrates many solemn truths, and even by the one word, "of His own will" (βουληθείς), he repudiates alike the dangerous fatalism of the Pharisees, and the arrogant assertion of the

is that He is; He is and changeth not" (Bishop Andrewes, Serm. iii. 374; John viii. 58).

[1] God is the cause of His own mercy. "Unde sequitur naturale esse Deo benefacere" (Calvin). See John i. 13; 1 Pet. i. 23. βουληθείς, "voluntate amantissimâ, liberrimâ, purissimâ, foecundissimâ" (1 John i. 13; 1 Pet. i. 3). Ἀπεκύησεν, the antithesis to the ἀποκύει of sin, in ver. 17, "Ipse Deus *Patris et matris loco est*" (Bengel) (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iii. 26; 1 Pet. i. 23).

[2] John xvii. 17, "Sanctify them by Thy truth. Thy word is Truth." 1 Pet. i. 23, "Having been born again by the word of the Living God." It is the equivalent to the Gospel (2 Tim. ii. 15; Eph. i. 13). "The lying word of the serpent has corrupted us, but the true word of God makes us good again" (Luther). Here and elsewhere, some (*e.g.* Athanasius) give to "the Word" its specific Johannine sense, and interpret it of Christ, the Divine Logos. No doubt it may be *made* to bear this meaning in this and many other passages; but as this letter was addressed to the Jews of the Dispersion, of whom many had no Alexandrian training or Alexandrian sympathies, the question is, (1) Would they so have understood it? and, therefore, (2) Did St. James intend it so to be understood?

[3] "First-fruit" (see Lev. xxiii. 10; Deut. xxvi. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 22; xvi. 15; Rev. xiv. 4). Christ is the true first-fruit, and then we in Him (Rom. viii. 19—22). See a valuable note of Wiesinger, who was the first to call due attention to the depth and importance of this verse.

Sadducees that salvation lies within the power of our own unaided will (i. 16—18).

ix. They know this; but let them apply it—let them listen to this word of truth, hearing more, speaking less, wrangling not at all. Passionate fanaticism does not help forward God's righteousness. It deceives itself when it brings into God's service that impure mixture of human evil.[1] The Gospel is meant to be used for our own sanctification, not to be abused to quarrelsomeness with others. God's word, implanted in the heart,[2] is powerful to save, but the condition of its power is its meek reception. It requires steady, earnest contemplation, not a mere hasty passing gaze. There were many, both Jews and Christians, who were absorbed in outward service[3]—who were content with endless ablutions and purifications, and not with what is true, pure, unspotted, and undefiled; who made long prayers, and yet devoured widows' houses. But all service is fruitless if it does not lead a man to refrain from bitter words. The only pure and perfect ritual is active love,[4] and a freedom from "the contagions of the world's slow stain."[5]

[1] "Purius sine ira fit" (Bengel). There is always a germ of the atheistical in the heat of fanaticism (Nitsch), as in Jonah's, "I do well to be angry." Lange observes that Simeon and Levi, the ancestors of the Jews in fanaticism, were disapproved by Jacob (Gen. xxxiv. 49), but afterwards upheld as patterns (Judith ix. 20).

[2] Perhaps an allusion to the Parable of the Sower, and so parallel with Matt. xiii. 23. The word ἔμφυτος only occurs in Wisd. xii. 10. In classic Greek it means also "*innate*," but this does not furnish so simple a meaning, though it may be compared with such passages as Col. ii. 16, "as ye have *received* Christ, so *walk* ye in Him."

[3] See Dr. Mozley's admirable sermon on the Pharisees. "Qui crassiora vitia exuerunt, huic morbo sunt ut plurimum obnoxii" (Calvin).

[4] Comp. Tobit i. 16, 17.

[5] "The outward service (θρησκεία) of ancient religion, the rites, cere-

He proceeds, in the second chapter, to rebuke the respect of persons,[1] the worldly partialities, which are so alien to "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of the glory."[2] That faith teaches before all things the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Since in God's sight all are equal—since in the eye of His Church the greatest princess is but "this woman," and the proudest emperor but "this man"—was it not most unworthy to thrust oppressive disparities into prominence in a wrong place by ushering the gold-ringed man[3] in the bright dress into the best seat in the synagogue,[4] while they made the squalidly dressed pauper[5] stand anywhere, or thrust him down into a seat on the floor. When ye acted thus, "did ye

monies, and ceremonial vestments of the old law, had morality for their substance. They were the letter of which morality was the spirit; the enigma of which morality was the meaning. But morality itself is the service and ceremonial (*cultus exterior*, *θρησκεία*) of the Christian religion" (Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, *Aph.* xxiii).

[1] Curiously enough the Talmud says, "God is a respecter of persons," Num. vi. 26 (Berachoth, f. 20, *b*).

[2] Lit. "of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the glory." Bengel takes the two words in apposition—"*ut ipse Christus dicatur*, *ἡ δόξα*, *Gloria*." The Shechinah was a Jewish name for the Messiah, but it is better, as in the E. V., to understand it as "the Lord of the glory" (comp. John xvii. 5). The title here implies the utter obliteration, by comparison, of petty earthly distinctions.

[3] The ostentation of gold rings was a fashion of this epoch, and Roman fops wore them even inconveniently large (Juv. *Sat.* i. 28, 30; *Mart.* xi. 60), six on each finger. Lucian (*Somn.* 12) speaks of wearing sixteen heavy rings. "All fingers are loaded with rings" (Plin. *H. N.* xxxiii. 6).

[4] "*A* synagogue" is, on the whole, the best supported reading (א, B, C). The passage is not a mere rebuke to "sexton rudeness." It illustrates faithless partiality by a common instance, and this desire for prominence was largely developed among the Jews (Matt. xxiii. 6). Christians probably used Jewish synagogues (as St. Paul did) as long as they were permitted to do so.

[5] No doubt "gold rings" and squalid apparel (Zech. iii. 3, 4; Rev. xxii. 11) may be used symbolically, but to understand this passage as an allegory

not *doubt* in yourselves,[1] and did ye not show wicked reasonings as judges?" It shows *doubt* to act as though Christ had never promised His kingdom to the poor, rich in faith;[2] and wicked reasonings to argue mentally that the poor *must* be less worthy of honour than the rich. It is the evil schism in the heart which leads to this evil judgment in the life. And was not this a strange method of judging, when it was the rich who played the lord over them, dragged them into law-courts,[3] and blasphemed the fair name by which they were named?[4] It were nobler to fulfil the royal law,[5] "Love thy neighbour as thyself," and so to treat all, whether rich or poor, with equal courtesy. Not to act thus is sin. They must not regard such sin as unimportant. There is in God's law a uniform soli-

of Jewish exclusiveness towards the Gentiles (as Lange does), is very far-fetched. Notice the picturesque antitheses—

You—sit—here—honourably (near the coffer which held the Law).

You—stand—there—under my footstool (out of sight and hearing, near the door).

Even in courts of law the Jewish rule was that (to show the perfect impartiality of the law) *both* suitors, whether rich or poor, should sit, or *both* stand.

[1] διεκρίθητε. "Doubt" is the ordinary meaning of διακρίνομαι, as in i. 6; and there is no reason to change it here into "make differences, or judge," etc. (Matt. xxi. 21; Acts x. 20; Rom. iv. 20, etc.).

[2] Matt. v. 3; Luke vi. 20.

[3] Acts vii. 12; xvii. 12; xviii. 5; xix. 38.

[4] Literally "which was invoked over you" (Deut. xxviii. 10, etc.; Jer. xiv. 9; Am. ix. 12; Heb. xi. 16), *i.e.*, the name of Christ. Christians were called οἱ Χριστοῦ (1 Cor. iii. 23). Nominal Christians, however rich, could hardly have ventured to "blaspheme," or "speak injuriously of," the name of Christ. St. James must be passing in thought to rich Jews, Sadducean oppressors, etc. (Acts iv. 1, 6, v. 17), though he may include the conduct of rich Christians which *caused* Christ's name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles, as the Jews caused God's name to be (Rom. ii. 24; comp. 2 Sam. xii. 14).

[5] A royal law, because the best of all laws—a king of laws. "Love is the fulfilment (πλήρωμα) of the Law" (Rom. xiii. 10).

darity, and one God made all the law. To break one commandment is to break all,[1] for it is to violate the principle of obedience, just as "it matters not at what particular point a man breaks his way out of an enclosure, if he is forbidden to go out of it at all."[2] Every separate commandment has the same Divine source. The sum total of all commandments is that law of liberty[3] by which we shall be judged. That judgment shall be merciless to the merciless.[4] And then he adds, with an emphasis all the more forcible from its brevity and abruptness: "Mercy"—whether in the heart of God or of man—"glories over judgment"[5] (ii. 1—13).

The passage that follows is the famous passage about justification by works:—

"What is the advantage, my brethren, if any say that he has faith, but hath not works?[6] Is the faith able to save him?[7] But if a brother or a sister be naked, and lacking the day's food, and one

[1] "He who observes but *one* precept, secures for himself an advocate (Parklit, or Paraclete), and he who commits one sin procures for himself an accuser" (Pirke Avoth, iv. 15).

[2] "A garment is torn though you only take away one piece of it; a harmony in music is spoiled if only one voice be out of tune" (Starke).

[3] St. James is thinking of the free service of the will to Christ's pure moral law, not of the law "which gendereth to bondage," and enforces incessant restrictions on unwilling souls (Gal. iv. 10, 24), which was a yoke which neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear (Acts xv. 10).

[4] Matt. vii. 1.

[5] This is a great law of the moral kingdom. It applies alike to God and to men. 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. It is the reason why Christian universality is better than Judaising exclusiveness; why the geniality, love, and brightness of the Gospel is better than the gloomy hatred of the Talmud; why tolerance is better than the Inquisition; why philanthropy is nobler than sensual egotism (see Lange, p. 78).

[6] Comp. *οὐ γὰρ ὀφειλήσει τινα τὸ λέγειν ἀλλὰ τὸ ποιεῖν· ἐκ παντὸς οὖν τρόπου καλῶν ἔργων χρεία* (Clem. *Hom.* viii. 7).

[7] Not if it be the faith that St. James has in view, which is here merely a *theoretically orthodox belief*, not a *vital faith*. Such a faith cannot save such a man. Vital faith carries in itself the animating principle from

of you should say, 'Go in peace;[1] warm yourselves and feed yourselves,' but ye give them not the necessaries of the body, what is the advantage?[2] So also faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.[3] Yea, some one may say[4] [quite fairly], 'Thou hast faith and I have works. Show me thy faith without the works'—which you cannot do—'and I,' who do not pretend to believe in the possibility of such a faith, 'will,' very easily, 'show thee my faith by my works'" (ii. 14–18).

Assuming that the Solifidian—the believer in the possibility of an abstract faith which can show no works as an evidence of its existence—is thus refuted, St. James proceeds to refute him still farther:—"*Thou* believest that God is one."[5] It was the proud boast of the Jew,

which works must emanate. The whole argument is aimed at those Antinomians who said, "If you have faith, it matters little how you live" (Jer. *in Mich.* iii. 5).

[1] Such a parting benediction would, without some accompanying help, be as incongruous a mockery as Claudius's reply of "*Avete vos*" to the gladiators' "*Morituri te salutamus*" (Judg. xviii. 6; 2 Kings xv. 9; Lk. vii. 50; viii. 48). Similarly, Plautus has "Of what use is your benevolent language if your help is dead?" (*Epidic.* i. 2, 13).

[2] St. James uses an illustration of what faith leads to, which he borrows from the teaching of Christ (Matt. xxv. 35—46).

[3] Just as the compassion is dead and useless if it be that of

> "The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe,
> Who sigh for wretchedness yet shun the wretched,
> Nursing in some delicious solitude
> Their dainty loves and slothful sympathies"—(Coleridge.)

so faith is dead and useless if it do not work by love. "No spirit, if no work (*Spectrum est, non spiritus*); a flying shadow it is; a spirit it is not, if work it do not. Having wherewith to do good, if you do it not, talk not of faith, for you have no faith in you if you have wherewith to show it and show it not" (Bp. Andrewes).

[4] Ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις, is something in St. Paul's manner (1 Cor. xv. 35; Rom. ix. 19). The interlocutor is not here, however, an objector, but a Gentile Christian, who makes a perfectly true criticism of the worthlessness of an idle orthodoxy (see Tert. *De Pœnit.* 5). "Faith," says Luther, "is the mother who gives birth to the virtues as her children." And St. Paul presses the same truth quite as clearly as St. James (Rom. ii. 13).

[5] Σὺ, emphatic; *thou*, as distinguished from the heathen. The Jews had learnt *Credere Deum*, and *Credere Deo*, but not (according to St.

who, among all the nations of antiquity, gloried in being a monotheist.

"Excellent so far; the demons also believe and shudder.[1] But wilt thou recognise, O vain man,[2] that faith apart from works is idle?[3] Abraham, our father—was he not justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?[4] Dost thou see that faith wrought with his works,[5] and by works the faith was perfected?[6] And the Scripture was fulfilled which says,[7] 'But Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God.[8] Ye sĕe that by works a

Augustine's distinction) *Credere in Deum.* This shows that St. James is thinking of some sort of verbal orthodoxy, not of specific Christian faith. The Unity of God was the very first and most important belief of Judaism. The first line of the Talmud begins with discussing it; it was daily repeated in the *Shemâ* (Deut. vi. 4), to which, as to all their observances, the Jews attached most extravagant virtue. Thus they said that the fires of Gehenna would be cooled for him who repeated it with attention to its very letters. To this they attached Hab. ii. 4. All the fine things which they called *hapardes* (הפרדס), the "Garden," or "Paradise," turned on the Unity of God. Akhiva was supremely blessed because he died uttering the word "*One*" (*see infra*, p. 83).

[1] This unique and unexpected word (*φρίσσουσι, horrescunt*) comes in with great rhetorical and ironic force. It explains the horror of physical antipathy. For the *fact*, see Matt. viii. 29; Mark ix. 20, 26. "The sarcasm lies in the fact itself. Formally, it only flashes out in the splendid *καί*" (Lange).

[2] The Hebrew רֵקָא, Râca (Matt. v. 22). Some think that this objurgation is aimed at St. Paul! Apostles did not speak of each other in the language of modern religious controversy (see Pirke Avoth, i. 17).

[3] ἀργή, B, C.

[4] St. Paul does not refer to this act, which is indeed only alluded to in Heb. xi. 17 (and Wisd. x. 5), but to the faith which Abraham had shown forty years before.

[5] "*Operosa fuit non otiosa*" (Calvin).

[6] "Faith aided in the completion of the work, and the work aided in the completion of the faith" (Lange). "His faith was *completed*, not that it had been imperfect, but that it was consummated in the exercise" (Luther).

[7] Says *elsewhere*, Gen. xv. 6 (before the sacrifice of Isaac).

[8] Is. xli. 8. In Gen. xxv. 9, this clause seems to have occurred in some readings (Ewald, *Die Sendschreiben*, ii. 225). Abraham is still known through the East as *El Khalil Allah* ("the Friend of God"), and hence Hebron is called El Khalil. Dean Plumptre points out the curious fact that the title occurs *neither in the Hebrew nor in the LXX.*, and is first applied to Abraham by Philo (*De resip. Noe*, c. 11).

man is justified, and not by faith only.[1] But likewise also Rahab, the harlot,[2] was she not justified by works, when she received the messengers, and hastily sent them forth by another way? For even as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead."[3]

Leaving the theology of this remarkable passage for subsequent discussion,[4] in order not to break the thread of the Epistle, we proceed to the next chapter.

It was natural that those who had seized a Shibboleth, of which they neither fathomed the full depth nor even rightly understood the superficial meaning, should endeavour to enforce it upon others with irate, obtrusive, and vehement dogmatism. This "itch of teaching," this oracular egotism, is the natural result of vanity and selfishness disguising themselves under the cloak of Gospel proselytism. With all such men words take the place of works, and dogmatising contentiousness of peace and love. Therefore he warns them against being many teachers[5]—self-constituted ministers—"other peoples' bishops"[6]—persons of that large class who assume that no incompetence is too

[1] St. Paul had adduced Abraham as a proof of justification by *faith*, not by *legalism*. St. James adduces him as an example of justification by the *works which spring from faith*, not by *orthodoxy*.

[2] This second example is chosen because he wishes to prove the unity of faith in Jews and Gentiles, by two examples of faith manifested by works. Abraham was a man, a Hebrew, a Prophet; Rahab a woman, a Canaanite, a harlot; yet both were justified (*i.e.*, shown to be righteous in the *moral* sense) by works which sprang from their faith (Heb. xi. 31).

[3] ii. 19—26.

[4] See *infra*, pp. 79—100.

[5] Any authorised person might speak, either in the synagogue or the early Christian assembly (1 Cor. xiv. 26—34). The ordinary readers and preachers were not clergy at all. The eager seizure of a party watchword would be likely to lead to mere prating.

[6] ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοποι (1 Pet. iv. 15).

absolute to rob them of the privilege of infallibility in laying down the law of truth for others. "My brethren, do not become many teachers,[1] being well aware that we (teachers) shall receive a severer judgment than others," since our responsibility is greater than theirs. "For in many respects we stumble, all of us."[2] Speech is the instrument of all teachers. If any man stumbles not in word, he is a perfect man,[3] able to bridle also the whole body. Sins of speech are so common, the temptations to them are so universal, that there can be no question of the perfect wisdom and self-control of him who has acquired an absolute immunity from these. For how great is the power of the tongue! how evil its depravity, untameableness, and duplicity! It is like the little bridles which rule the horse, like the little helms that steer the great ships. It is like the spark which kindles a conflagra-

[1] Matt. xxiii. 8—10. "But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your guide—even Christ; but all ye are brethren." "Love the work, but strive not after the honour of a teacher" (Pirke Avoth, i. 10).

[2] St. James would no more have thought of claiming immunity from sin than St. Paul (Phil. iii. 12) or St. John (1 John i. 8) did. When Schleiermacher condemned this passage as "bombast," he condemned the equally strong language of many great moralists of all ages. And it must be remembered that St. James was living in the Jerusalem of A.D. 60. There was not more backbiting *then* than there now is, but good men felt its evil more strongly. They did not take an interest in it, let it lie on their tables, subscribe to its dissemination. Compare the language of the Son of Sirach (xxviii. 15—26): "Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. . . . Strong cities hath it pulled down; well is he that hath not passed through the venom thereof. . . The death thereof is an evil death; the grave were better than it. . . . Such as forsake the Lord shall fall into it; *and it shall burn in them and not be quenched*; it shall be sent unto them as a lion, and devour them as a leopard." For Jewish views, even of the Talmudists, see Schoettgen.

[3] "By thy words thou shalt be justified" (Matt. xii. 37). See the great sermon on this text by Barrow.

tion in the forest.[1] Yes, the tongue—that world of injustice—is a fire. It inflames the wheel of being,[2] and is ever inflamed by Gehenna.[3] It is the sole untameable creature—a restless mischief brimmed with deathful venom.[4] Therewith we bless the Lord and Father, and therewith we curse the human beings who have been made after His likeness.[5] Is this inconsistency anything short of monstrous?[6] Is it not like a fountain bubbling out of the same fissure the bitter as well as the sweet? Can a tree produce fruits not its own?[7] Can the salt water of a cursing tongue produce the sweet water of praise? (iii. 1—12).

[1] Both these metaphors are common in classical writers (Soph. *Antig.* 332, 475), and both occur in the hymn of Clemens of Alexandria (*Pædog. ad finem*). "Quam lenibus initiis quanta incendia oriuntur" (Sen. *Controv.* v. 5). "Υλη is here probably "a wood," not "material." The setting on fire of forests by sparks furnished similes even in Homer's days (Hom. *Il.* ii. 455; xi. 115; Virg. *Georg.* ii. 303: "et totum involvit flammis nemus"); but St. James is more likely to have adopted it from Philo (*De migr. Abr.* p. 407). μεγαλαυχεῖ (ver. 5) occurs only in Philo.

[2] iii. 6., τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως (comp. Eccl. xii. 6). It is a phrase of uncertain meaning, perhaps "the orb of creation"—hardly "the rolling wheel of life" (ἀνακύκλησις, see Windet, *De Vita funct.*), though Anacreon uses that expression, and the Syriac here has, "it turneth the course of our generations, which run as a wheel" (comp. Sil. Ital. iii. 6, "rota volvitur aevi)."

[3] Comp. Pss. lii. 2—5; cxx. 3, 4; Prov. xxvi. 27: "*there is as a burning fire;*" (Ecclus. v. 14; xxii. 24, "As the vapour and smoke of a furnace goeth before the fire, so reviling before blood").

[4] Hermas, who has several references to this Epistle, says (*Pastor.* ii. 2): "Backbiting is a wicked spirit, and a restless demon" (comp. Ps. cxl. 13).

[5] Even in fallen man, "*remanet nobilitas indelebilis*" (Beng.). He still retains sparks (*scintillulae*, Confess. Belg. 14) of the heavenly fire, though "very far gone from original righteousness" (Art. ix.).

[6] The word χρὴ occurs here alone in the New Testament or the LXX. The word which they use for "ought" is δεῖ, which expresses moral fitness. "Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner" (Ecclus. xv. 9).

[7] Matt. vii. 16, 17. The metaphors both of this and the next verse show a marked local colouring.

These sins of the tongue among Jews and Christians sprang in great measure from the obtrusive rivalries, the contentious ambitions to which he had alluded in the first verse. Never have they been extinct. Party spirit has always been a curse and disease of every religion, even of the Christian. The formulas of Christian councils have been tagged with anathemas; Te Deums have been chanted at Autos da Fé. And because this factiousness shows an absence of true wisdom amid the pride of its imagined presence, he proceeds to contrast the false and the true wisdom. True wisdom, true understanding,[1] is shown by a course of life spent in meekness, which is the attribute of wisdom.[2] For a man to boast of wisdom when his heart is full of bitter emulation and party spirit is a lying vaunt. The wisdom of which he thus boasts is not, at any rate, the heavenly wisdom of the Christian, but earthly, animal,[3] demon-like. The wisdom which evinces itself in party spirit leads to unhallowed chaos and every contemptible practice. "But the wisdom from above is first pure,[4] then peace-

[1] "Who is wise (*chakam*) and intelligent (*nabhon*) amongst you?" (Deut. i. 13; iv. 6; Eph. i. 8; Col. i. 9). The ἐπιστημών is one who understands and knows; the σοφός is one who carries out his knowledge into his life. "*Knowledge* comes, but *wisdom* lingers" (Tennyson). (Job xxviii. 12.) [2] Ps. l. 16—20.

[3] ψυχικός (see Jude 19); ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες. "Soulish"—*i.e.*, sensuous—living only the natural animal life, and therefore *unspiritual*. This wisdom is earthly, because it avariciously cares for the goods of earth (Phil. iii. 19); animal, because it is under the sway of animal lusts (1 Cor. ii. 14); demon-like, because full of pride, egotism, malignity, and ambition, which are works of the devil (1 Tim. iv. 1).

[4] "Pure," *i.e.*, chaste, consecrated, free from admixture of carnal motives. Even out of this strong condemnation of contentious dogmatism, the universal misinterpretation of Scripture has extorted an excuse—nay, an argument—for intolerance. But the wisdom is only said to be "*first* pure," because "purity" describes its *inward essence*, and the other

ful, reasonable, open to persuasion, full of mercy and good fruits, without vacillation,[1] without hypocrisy. . . . But the fruit of righteousness is ever sown in peace by those who work peace" (ii. 13—18). Thus we see that with St. James, no less than with St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, love, peace, mutual respect, mutual toleration, is the highest form of wisdom, and is a far truer sign than a contentious and bitter orthodoxy that he who has it has reached to the highest ideal of the Christian character.

But how strong are the feelings of St. James on this subject! It was a period of turmoil and contention within and without the fold.[2]

"Whence," he asks, "come wars, and whence fightings among you? Is it not from hence, from your pleasures that militate in

epithets its outward manifestations. "Peaceable" (Matt. v. 9), "reasonable," *i.e.*, "forbearing" (1 Tim. iii. 3), "open to persuasion" (Vulg. *suadibilis*), or perhaps "winning its way by gentleness." Seven qualities of wisdom—seven colours of the Divine rainbow—all blended into the one "Light of the world." The phrase "the wisdom from above" is common in the Talmudic writings, where it is attributed to Adam, Enoch, Solomon, etc.

[1] ἀδιάκριτος, one of St. James's frequent *hapax legomena*. It is better to interpret it by the ordinary sense of διακρίνομαι, "to doubt." The E. V. follows Luther in rendering it "without partiality." Bengel says, "Non *facit discrimen* ubi non opus est." Lange, "unsectarian," "not Separatist," *i.e.*, not Pharisaic. There is force in his remark that the epithet would naturally refer to social conduct, and have some relation to ἀνυπόκριτος. If so, we may render it "not *partial*," or "censorious." "Being ἀδιάκριτος it does not spy out motes in a brother's eye; and being ἀνυπόκριτος, it does not hide the beam in its own" (Wordsworth, who adds that "this beautiful picture of true wisdom may be placed side by side with that of charity portrayed by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii.). Comp. Ecclus. i. 1—11, "All wisdom cometh from the Lord, and is with Him for ever. . . Wisdom hath been created before all things, and the understanding of prudence from everlasting. The Word of God Most High is the fountain of wisdom. . . She is with all flesh, according to His gift, and He hath given her to them that love Him."

[2] See *infra*, Chapter xxix., on the Last Days of Jerusalem.

your members?[1] Ye desire and have not. Ye murder[2] and envy and are not able to obtain. Ye battle and ye war, and ye receive not because ye ask not for yourselves. Ye ask and receive not because ye ask ill for yourselves that ye may squander it in your pleasures. Adulteresses![3] know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? Whosoever, then, prefers to be a friend of the world, establishes himself as an enemy of God. Or deem ye that it is vainly that the Scripture saith, 'The spirit which He made to dwell in us jealously yearneth over us?'[4] But" (because of this jealous love for us) "He giveth greater grace. Wherefore He saith God arrayeth Himself against the haughty, but giveth grace to the humble"[5] (iv. 1—6).

i. This passage is in several respects remarkable. First, we cannot but feel surprise at such a picture as this. Wars, fightings, pleasures that are ever setting out as it were on hostile expeditions,[6] disappointed desires, frustrate envy and even fruitless murder to supply wants which would have been granted to prayer

[1] "For in truth nothing else except the body and its desires causes wars, and seditions, and battles" (Plato, *Phædo*, p. 66, *c*).

[2] Some conjecture *φθονεῖτε*, "ye grudge;" but the reading is probably right, and *means* "ye murder," not "ye *wish* to kill," etc. See below.

[3] *Μοιχαλίδες*! (The *μοιχοί* is omitted by ℵ, A, B). The *feminine* word is explained by the common Old Testament metaphor for idolatry (Isa. liv. 5; Jer. ii. 12; Ezek. xvi. 32). Hence in the New Testament *γενεὰ μοιχαλίς* (Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4; 2 Cor. xi. 2); and the strange expression of 2 Pet. ii. 14, "having eyes *full of an adulteress*" (see note there).

[4] See *infra*, p. 63. *πρὸς φθόνον*, not "against envy" (Luther), but the phrase seems to be adverbial, like *πρὸς βίαν*, *πρὸς ἡδονήν*, etc. *ἐπιποθεῖ* never means "lusteth," as in E.V., but expresses warm tenderness (2 Cor. ii. 9; Phil. i. 8). This seems to be the only tenable translation. I may mention one other version, which is to make *πνεῦμα* an accusative—"God yearns jealously for the spirit which He placed in us, and gives us greater grace." Yet another way (but inconsistent with the usage of the phrase *ἡ γραφὴ λέγει*) is to break the clause into two questions—"Do ye fancy that the Scripture speaketh vainly? Doth the Spirit, which He planted in us, lust to envy?" (I see that this is accepted by the Revised Version, with the other renderings in the margin.)

[5] Prov. iii. 34; 1 Pet. v. 5; Clem. Rom. c. 30.

[6] iv. 1, *στρατευομένων*.

—then, again, prayers utterly neglected or themselves tainted with sin because misdirected to reckless gratification of pleasure, and because ruined by contentiousness[1] and selfishness—all this spiritual adultery, the divorce of the soul from God to the love of the world—is this indeed a picture of the condition of Christian Churches within thirty years of the death of Christ? Again, I see no possible solution of the difficulty except in the twofold answer—partly that St. James is influenced by the state of things which he saw going on around him in Judæa, and partly that he is drawing no marked line of distinction between Jews and Christians in the communities which he is addressing.[2] And this being so, there was certainly in the Palestine of that day an ample justification for every line of the dark delineation. Alike among priests and patriots there was a fierce and luxurious greed. Strifes about the Law were loud and violent.[3] Even in the days of our Lord, while the tree of Jewish nationality was still green, and not dry, as it had now become, the very Temple had been polluted into a brigands' cave.[4] The dagger of the assassin was often secretly employed to get rid of a political opponent. A

[1] St. Peter saw no less clearly (1 Pet. iii. 7) that quarrelsomeness is fatal to prayer.

[2] It is a weighty remark of Lange (*ad loc.*) that "James put this Epistle into the hands of the Jewish Christians that it might influence all Jews, as it was a missionary instruction to the converted for the unconverted, and the truly converted for the half-converted."

[3] St. Paul (Tit. iii. 9) applies to these the very word of St. James, "legal battles" (*μάχαι νομικαί*). There were the struggling sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Herodians, Samaritans, etc. Laurentius says—"Non loquitur Apostolus de bellis et caedibus, sed de mutuis dissidiis, litibus, jurgiis, et contentionibus." Doubtless of these—but of actual struggles also

[4] *σπηλαῖον λῃστῶν*, Matt. xxi. 13. Comp. Mark xv. 7; Acts xxi. 38.

bloodthirsty spirit had possessed itself of the once peaceful nation. Righteousness had once dwelt in their city, but now murderers. Men like Barabbas had become heroes of the people. Men like Theudas, and Judas, and the Epygtian impostor, were crowding the horizon of the people's life, and found no difficulty in leading after them 4,000 men or even murderers. Zealots had increased in numbers and in recklessness. Bands of robbers were the terror of every district which offered them hopes of plunder. Assassins lurked in the streets, and mingled unnoticed in the dense throngs which crowded the Temple courts at the great annual festivals.[1] Sects were arrayed in bitter envy against sects, and all were united in burning hatred against their Roman conquerors. It became in popular estimation a pious act—an act which even High Priests could hail and bless—for *sicarii* to bind themselves under a curse to waylay and massacre an enemy.[2] The fury of fanatical savagery assumed the guise of patriotism. False Christs and false prophets abounded and flourished, but "Stone him," and "Crucify him," and "Away with him," and "He is not fit to live," were cries into which men were ready to burst at a moment's notice against those whose thoughts had been enlightened to believe in the Son of God.

Besides all this, the world and the interests of the world assumed a complete preponderance in the thoughts of all men; the fear of God seemed to have been banished into the far background of life. Could such men pray at all? Yes, and long prayers and loud prayers in the Temple courts and at the

[1] See Jos. *B. J.* ii. 1, 23; iv. 10; vii. 31; *Antt.* xviii. 1.
[2] Acts xxiii. 12.

corners of the streets, at the very time when they were devouring widows' houses, and making their proselytes ten-times-worse children of Gehenna than themselves. There is literally no end to the anomalies of prayers. Rochester went home to pen a pious prayer in his private diary on the very day that he had been persuading his sovereign to commit an open sin. Cornish wreckers went straight from church to light their beacon-fires, and Italian brigands promise to their saints a share in the profits of their murders.[1] This "Italian piety" is the terrible state of moral apostasy against which St. James speaks with all the impassioned sternness of one of the old prophets. Like Amos, who had, no less than himself, been both a peasant and a Nazarite, he raised his indignant voice against the luxury and idolatry of the Chosen People. It is in the love of the world that he sees the source of all these enormities, and it is against this love of the world, arrayed in the golden robe of the hierarchy, and wearing "Holiness to the Lord" upon its forehead—it is against this tainted scrupulosity and mitred atheism that he speaks trumpet-tongued.

ii. But besides these remarks on the general purport of the chapter, we must notice his unidentified quotation. The English version renders it "*the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.*" The correct version, according to the best reading, is probably as I have given it, "The spirit, which He made to dwell in us, yearneth over us jealously." The meaning, then, is that the guilt of worldly unfaithfulness is enhanced because the Spirit of God, which He hath given us, longs with a jealous

[1] Plumptre, p. 89.

fondness that we should pay to God an undivided allegiance, a whole-hearted friendship; and for that reason He gives us greater grace—greater because of His yearning pity and love.[1] But where does this passage occur in Scripture? Doubtless from the library of the writers of the Old Covenant, which forms our Old Testament, we can produce analogies, more or less distinct, to the general meaning of this utterance,[2] but nowhere do we find the exact words. Only two solutions are therefore possible—(1) St. James may be quoting from some lost book, or some apocryphal book—like the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. The suggestion is rendered less unlikely by the references which he makes in this Epistle to other apocryphal books,[3] and by the fact that his brother, St. Jude, quotes from the Book of Enoch.[4] We must in that case understand the words ἡ γραφὴ in a lower sense than that which we attribute to the Scripture. Or (2) he may be adopting the method, not unknown to the Scripture writers and to early Fathers, of concentrating the meaning of several separate passages

[1] Here, as elsewhere, I have not thought it worth while to trouble the reader with masses of "explanations," which torture out of the words the most impossible senses by the most untenable methods. Beza, Grotius, &c., make it mean "the spirit of man has a natural bias to envy," but ἐπιποθεῖ cannot bear this sense, nor that given by Bede, Calvin, &c., "Is the Spirit (of God) *prone to envy?*" nor that of Bengel, "the Spirit lusteth against envy." There is much less objection to the view of Huther, Wiesinger, &c., "He (God) yearns jealously over the Spirit which He has placed in us, and gives greater grace" (*supra*, p. 60).

[2] It has been variously referred to Gen. vi. 3, 5; Num. xi. 29; Ezek. xxiii. 25; xxxvi. 27; Deut. v. 9; xxxii. 10, 11; Ps. cxix. 20; Prov. xxi. 10; Cant. viii. 6; Ecclus. iv. 4; Wisd. vi. 12, 23.

[3] Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom. Similarly the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes distinct references to the Books of Maccabees (xi. 37, 38).

[4] Jude 14.

into one terse summary.[1] In that case the word "saith" will have to be understood generically to mean, "Is not this the sense of Scripture?" If we adopt this solution, we must suppose that the passages alluded to are such as Gen. vi. 3, "My spirit shall not always strive with men;" or Deut. xxxii. 11, where God describes His love for Israel under the image of an eagle covering her young in the nest, and bearing them on her wings, and where in the Septuagint this very verb *epipothei*, or "yearns over," occurs; or, again, Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "I will put My spirit within you." The difficulty cannot yet be considered to have been removed, but other methods of solving it are far less probable than the two to which I have here referred.

iii. Having thus shown their dangerous condition, he urges them, with strong exhortation, which reminds us of the tone of Joel, to submission, moral effort, resistance of the devil,[2] the earnest seeking of God, and deep humiliation of soul,[3] which might lead God to interfere on their behalf.

iv. Then, with a repetition of the word "brethren," which shows that his rebukes are being uttered in the spirit of love, he warns them once more against evil-speaking as a sin which is adverse to the humility

[1] We find similar condensed quotations in John vii. 33, 42; Matt. ii. 23; and perhaps Eph. v. 14. Dean Plumptre quotes from Clemens Romanus (c. 46) the curious passage, "It has been written, 'Cleave to the saints, for they who cleave to them shall be sanctified.'"

[2] This is one of the few places in the New Testament where διάβολος occurs. "The devil," says Hermas (*Past.* ii. 12), "can wrestle with us, but cannot throw us; if, then, thou resist him, he will be conquered, and flee from thee utterly ashamed." (Matt. iv. 1—11.)

[3] He uses the striking word κατήφεια—"downcastness of face"—which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. He is thinking of the outward manifestations as the signs of the inward humiliation.

which he has been urging on them, since it rises from an imaginary superiority. It arrogantly usurps the functions of God, who is the one true Judge, because He alone stands above the Law on the behests of which we are not capable of passing any final judgment.[1]

v. Passing to another sin, he strongly condemns the braggart self-confidence[2] and sensual security with which, like the Rich Fool in the Parable, men make gainful plans for the future without any reference to God, or to His provident ordering of our lives, or to the fact that life itself is—or rather that *they* themselves are—but as a fleeting mist.[3] They *knew* in their hearts that they ought not to speak thus. If they thought for a moment their consciences would condemn them for thus ignoring all reference to God, and this was a plain proof that it was sin[4] (iv. 13—17).

[1] "Nostrum non est judicare, praesertim cum exsequi non possumus" (Bengel). "To offer to domineer over the conscience," says the Emperor Maximilian, "is to assault the citadel of heaven."

[2] iv. 16. ἀλαζόνεια only in 1 John ii. 16: "Ye boast in your vainglorious presumptions."

[3] Job vii. 7; Ps. cii. 3; Wisd. v. 9—14. The best reading is ἀτμὶς γάρ ἐστε, "for *ye* are a vapour," B, and the Syriac and Æthiopic versions (and practically A, K, for ἔσται must be due to itacism). "Pulvis et umbra *sumus*" (Hor.). But St. James turns the transitoriness of life to an opposite lesson from that of the Epicureans (Hor. *Od.* 1, 9; 1 Cor. xv. 32).

[4] "There shall no harm happen unto me" (Ps. x. 6); "I shall die in my nest" (Job xxix. 18). For a Jew to talk thus, as if there were no God, or as though He took no part in the concerns of life, was to run counter to the central thought of their whole dispensation. A sense of God's nearness was the one thing which more than all others separated the Jews from other races as a chosen people. To abnegate this conviction in common talk was to show a practical apostasy. The Rabbinists also felt this. In *Debharim Rabba*, § 9, a father at his son's circumcision produces wine seven years old, and says, "With this wine will I continue for a long time to celebrate the birth of my new-born son." That night Rabbi Simeon meets the Angel of Death, and asks him "why he is wandering about." "Because," said Asrael, "*I slay those who say, We will do this or that, and think not*

vi. Then in language full of prophetic imagery and prophetic fire, meant to terrify men into thoughts of repentance, but not by any means as Calvin too characteristically said, *absque spe veniae*—"apart from hope of pardon"—he bursts into terrible denunciation of the rich, which shows how much his thoughts had dwelt upon their arrogant rapacity.

"Go to now, ye rich, weep, howling[1] over your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are rotted, and your garments have ecome moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver is rusted through nd through,[2] and the rust of them shall be for a witness to you,[3] nd shall eat your flesh[4] as fire. Ye treasured up in the last days.[5] o the pay of your labourers, who reaped your fields, the pay kept ack by fraud, cries aloud from you,[6] and the cries of the reapers

how soon death may overtake them. The man who said he would drink that wine often shall die in thirty days." From this verse, and from 1 Cor. iv. 19, "I will come quickly to you, *if God will*," has come the common phrase, "*Deo volente*."

[1] Only in Isa. xiii. 6; xiv. 31; xv. 3; xxxiii.; Ezek. xxxvii. The language must be judged from the standpoint of prophetical analogies in Isaiah, Amos, &c., and also in Matt. xxiii.; Rev. xviii. And the warnings, like all God's warnings, are hypothetical (Jonah iii. 10; Jer. xviii. 7—10).

[2] v. 2. The perfects are *prophetic* perfects; they express absolute certainty as to the ultimate result. Κατίωται is another *hapax legomenon* (except Ecclus. xii. 11), as are σέσηπεν (Ecclus. xiv. 19) and σητόβρωτα in this verse. Gold and silver do not *rust*, but the expression is perfectly intelligible (Isa. i. 22, "Thy silver has become dross").

[3] "In their tarnish and consumption you may see a picture of what will come on *you*." "Magna vanitas! thesaurisat moriturus morituris" (Aug.).

[4] τὰς σάρκας (plur.) has been taken to mean "your bloated bodies," &c., but occurs in Lev. xxvi. 29, &c.

[5] There was much worldly prosperity and ostentatious legalism at this epoch. Some take ὡς πῦρ after ἐθησαυρίσατε—"your treasury of gold is in reality a treasury of fire."

[6] "From you," *i.e.*, from your hands or treasures. Ecclus. xxxiv. 22, "He that taketh away his neighbour's living *slayeth* him, and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a blood-shedder" (comp. Gen. iv. 10; Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; Jer. xxii. 13; Mal. iii. 5). The rendering of the E. V., "kept back by you," is also tenable. The tract Succah

have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.[1] Ye luxuriated on the earth and waxed wanton, ye fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.[2] Ye condemned, ye killed the just man. He doth not resist you[3] (v. 1—6).

"Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.[4] So the husbandman awaiteth the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until he receive the early and latter rain.[5] Be patient then, ye also, stablish your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near" (v. 7, 8).

vii. Here again we ask, Of whom is the Prophet thinking? Were there indeed, in those early days of Christianity, any—still more, could there have been *many*—who correspond to this picture of voluptuous and fraudful wantonness, which had forgotten God and was so cruel and false to men? Surely St. Paul gives us the answer when he says, "Consider your calling, brethren. Not many of you are wise after the flesh; not many mighty, not many noble"[6]—and therefore certainly not many rich—"are called." In those early congregations of slaves and sufferers there was little to attract, there was everything to repel, the ordinary

(f. 29, *b*) gives four reasons why the avaricious lose their goods, which are (1) *because they keep back the pay of their labourers*; (2) because they neglect their welfare; (3) because they shift burdens upon them; (4) because of pride.

[1] The form of expression (used by no other New Testament writer, except in a quotation, Rom. ix. 29) is characteristically Judaic. The LXX. rendering is mostly παντοκράτωρ. See Bp. Pearson *On the Creed*, Art. 1.

[2] Like cattle grazing in rich pastures on the day that they are doomed to bleed (Theile); Ezek. xxxiv. 1—10.

[3] Hos. iv. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 24; Isa. liii. 7. This makes the conclusion of the clause far more striking than the proposed renderings, "Does he not set himself in array against you?" or "bring the armies against you?"

[4] This must be a reference to *Christ's* coming.

[5] The former in winter, the latter in spring (Deut. xi. 14; Jer. iii. 3; v. 24; Joel ii. 23).

[6] 1 Cor. i. 26.

multitude of the wealthy. In those days the truth of the Lord's words was seen, "How hardly shall they that have riches—how hardly shall they who trust in riches—enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The "deceitfulness of riches" became very manifest, and the "woe unto you that are rich" was seen in its full meaning. Rich men, indeed, there were in the Church, as there had been since Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa brought their costly spices to the tomb; for St. Paul in one of his latest Epistles could give a charge to the rich not to be arrogant, and not to trust in the uncertainty of riches.[1] But considering what a Christian had in those days to suffer, is it conceivable that any of the few rich men who had ventured to bear the reproach of the cross would have lived the haughty, greedy, oppressive life of the men on whom St. James here hurls his unsparing denunciation? So strongly has this difficulty been felt that some, once more, see in "the rich" only a symbol of the proud, haughty, exclusive, self-satisfied religionist;[2] but though the words "rich" and "poor" may not be confined to their literal senses—yet certainly the literal sense is not excluded. Once more, I see the explanation of his passion, the moving cause of his righteous menaces, in the conduct of the leading classes at Jerusalem—the gorgeously clad Herodians, the aristocratic Sadducees. The extracts from the Talmudists which I have given on a previous page describe their conduct, and will show what bitter need there was for the language which St. James employs.

[1] 1 Tim. v. 17.

[2] Comp. Rev. ii. 9; iii. 17; and see 1 Sam. ii. 8; Ps. lxxii. 13; Amos ii. 6; Luke i. 52, 53; vi. 20, &c.

Nor is Josephus less emphatic.

"About this time," he says, "King Agrippa gave the high priesthood to Ishmael Ben Phabi. And now arose a sedition on the part of the chief priests against the priests and the leaders of the multitude at Jerusalem. Each of them gathered around himself a company of the boldest innovators and became their leader. And when they came into collision they both abused each other and flung stones. There was no one to keep them in awe, but all these things went on with a high hand as though in a city where there was anarchy. And such impudence and audacity seized the chief priests that they even dared to send slaves to the threshing-floors to seize the tithes due to the priests. And it happened that some of the priests died of want from being deprived of their sustenance, so completely did the violence of the seditious prevail over all justice."[1]

viii. And if these words of St. James were addressed to Jews and Jewish Christians about the year A.D. 61, how speedily were his warnings fulfilled, how terribly and how soon did the retributive doom fall on these wealthy, luxurious tyrants! A few years later Vespasian invaded Judæa. Truly there was need to howl and weep when, amid the horrors caused by the rapid approach of the Roman armies, the gold and silver of the wealthy oppressors was useless to buy bread, and they had to lay up, for the moth to eat, those gorgeous robes which it would have been a peril and a mockery to wear. The worshippers at the last fatal Passover became the victims. The rich only were marked out for the

[1] Jos. *Antt.* xx. 8, § 8. He repeats the same complaints against Joshua, son of Gamala, in xx. 9, § 2.

worst fury of the Zealots, and their wealth sank into the flames of the burning city. Useless were their treasures in those "last days," when there was heard at the very doors the thundering summons of the Judge! In all their rich banquets and full-fed revelling they had but fattened themselves as human offerings for that day of slaughter! The Jewish historian here becomes the best commentator on the prophecies of the Christian Apostle.

ix. "*Ye condemned, ye murdered the just.*" The aorist tenses of the original may point equally well to some single act, or to a series of single acts; and "the just man" was a title of every devout and faithful Israelite. The present tense, "he doth not resist you"—so abruptly and pathetically introduced—seems to show that St. James is alluding to a general state of things. In the delivery of Christ to the Gentiles the Jewish Church had slain "that Just One;"[1] and since His death they had consented to the murder of His saints in the stoning of Stephen, and the beheading of James, the son of Zebedee. But in the scantiness of the records of the early Church of Jerusalem there is too much reason to fear that there was a crowd of obscurer martyrs.[2] And Christ suffered, as it were, again in the person of His saints. When they were murdered He was, as it were, led once more to unresisted sacrifice. And now St. James himself bore pre-eminently the title of "the Just." His words might seem to have been prophetic of his own rapidly-approaching fate, while yet they tacitly repudiate the title by which he was called, to

[1] Acts vii. 52.

[2] Acts xxvi. 10. "When they were condemned *to death*," says St. Paul, "I gave my voice against them."

confer it on Him who alone is worthy of it. But the state of things which he is describing was by no means isolated. It had been already described at length in the language of a book which also belonged to this epoch, and with which St. James has more than once shown himself to be familiar.

"For the ungodly said . . . Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present; and let us speedily use the creatures as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let none of us go without his portion of our voluptuousness—*let us oppress the poor righteous man* . . . for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth. Let us lie in wait for the righteous. He professeth to have the knowledge of God, and he calleth himself the child of the Lord. He was made to reprove our thoughts. We are esteemed of him as counterfeits. He pronounceth the *end of the just* to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his Father. Let us examine him with despitefulness and torture, *that we may know his meekness and prove his patience.* Let us condemn him with a shameful death, for by his own saying he shall be respected" (Wisd. ii. 6—20).

x. But all such warnings proved vain. Nay, it is probable that they only precipitated the fate of the speaker, and that he, like other prophets, felt the vengeance of those whose unrepented sins he so unsparingly denounced.[1] When the priests had murdered James the Just, not resisting them, but praying for them, the day for warning had passed away for ever, and over a guilty city and a guilty nation History pronounced once more her awful verdict of "Too late."

"Ye condemned, ye murdered the just. *He resisteth you not.*"[2] "And thus," says Wiesinger, "we

[1] Hegesippus, *ap.* Euseb. ii. 23; Origen, *c. Cels.* i. 48; Jer. *De Virr. Illustr.* ii.

[2] Comp. Amos v. 12: "They afflict the just . . . . therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time."

have, as it were, standing before us the slain and unresisting righteous man, when, lo! the curtain falls. Be patient, brethren, wait!" The coming of the Lord for which they had to wait was not far distant. The husbandman had to wait in patience, and often in disappointment, for the early and latter rain. Let them learn by his example. But since the Judge was standing already before the doors,[1] let them, that they might escape His condemnation, not only bear with patience the afflictions of persecutors, but also abstain from murmuring at each other's conduct.[2] It was patience that they needed most; patience with one another, patience under external trials. As an example of that patience, let them take the prophets, and let the Book of Job[3] remind them that in the end God ever vindicates His attributes of compassionate tenderness.[4]

xi. His task is now done, but he adds a few needful admonitions. Let them avoid all rash and needless oaths, and be simple in their affirmations.[5] Let them be more fervent in prayer.

[1] Some have fancied that the question tauntingly asked of St. James in the story of his martyrdom in Hegesippus—"Which is the *door* of Jesus?"—had reference to this saying of his; as though they would ask, "By *which* door will Christ come to judge?"; but it more probably refers to John x. 7—9 (see Gieseler, *Ch. Hist.* § 31).

[2] A clear reference to Matt. vii. 1 (*μὴ στενάζετε κατ' ἀλλήλων*); lit., "*groan* not against one another." The E. V. "grudge," once meant "murmur" (see Ps. lix. 15); "he eats his meat without grudging" (Shakesp. *Much Ado*, iii. 4, 90).

[3] Here alone referred to in the New Testament, though quoted in 1 Cor. iii. 19, and by Philo, *De Mutat. Nom.* xxiv.

[4] v. 9—11. Others interpret "Ye have seen the end of the Lord," to mean, "Ye saw the death of Christ," as in 1 Pet. ii. 22—25; *πολύσπλαγχνος* is yet another unique expression for *εὔσπλαγχνος* (Eph. iv. 32; 1 Pet. iii. 8). *οἰκτίρμων* occurs in Ecclus. ii. 13; Luke vi. 36.

[5] Comp. Matt. v. 35, 36. Jews (unlike Christians, alas!) were not likely to take *God's* name in vain. "That ye fall not into judgment"; the reading *εἰς ὑπόκρισιν*, gives a worse sense, and is not well supported.

"Is any one among you in affliction? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is any sick among you? Let him summon the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil[1] in the name of the Lord,[2] and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him (from his bed of sickness, Acts ix. 34).[3] Even if he shall have committed sin, it shall be remitted him. Confess then to one another[4] your transgressions, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.[5] Much availeth the supplication of a just man, when it worketh with energy. Elias was a man of like passions with us,[6] and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not upon the earth three years and six months.[7] And again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."[8]

[1] A common Eastern therapeutic, as we see from Isa. i. 6; Mark vi. 13; Luke x. 34; Jos. *B. J.* i. 33, § 5; *Antt.* xvii. 6, § 5. It was also used by Romans (Pliny, *H. N.* xxxi. 47). The use of oil for bodily healing is retained by the Eastern Church.

[2] That is, of Christ (Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts ii. 38; iii. 16; iv. 10; 1 Cor. i. 13—15).

[3] "Nisi mempe aliter ei suppeditat ad *aeternam* salutem" (Grotius). In the first Prayer-book of Edward VI. the anointing was accompanied by the prayer: "Our Heavenly Father vouchsafe for His great mercy (*if it be His blessed will*) to restore to thee thy bodily health." The prayer will not be thrown away; it will be answered as is best for us and the sufferer. How much connexion this has with Extreme Unction (of which with an anathema the Council of Trent commanded it to be understood) may be seen from the fact that extreme unction is forbidden, except in cases in which recovery seems quite hopeless.

[4] In the manipulation of this text by Cornelius à Lapide, "to one another" becomes "to a priest" ("frater fratri confitemini, *puta sacerdoti*"). Confession in sickness is also enjoined in the Talmud (Shabbath, f. 32, *a*).

[5] "When Rabba fell sick he bade his family publish it abroad, that they who hated him might rejoice, *and that they who loved him might intercede with God for him*" (Nedarim, f. 40, *a*). "The wise men have said, No healing is equal to that which comes from the Word of God and prayer" (Sepher Ha Chayim).

[6] Acts xiv. 15.

[7] Luke iv. 25. This period (42 months, 1,260 days—comp. Rev. xi. 3) was mentioned by the Jewish tradition (Yalkut Simeoni), and is perfectly consistent with fair inferences from 1 Kings xviii.

[8] v. 13—18. Thus the prayer of Elijah was one of mercy as well as one of judgment. Dean Plumptre thinks that St. James may have had in

The leading idea of this passage, which Lange most needlessly allegorises, is the efficacy of Christian prayer. The course which St. James recommends in cases of sickness is natural and beautiful, and in the small numbers of the Christian communities could be easily followed. It is the advice of which the entire spirit is carried out in our service for the Visitation of the Sick. We no longer, indeed, anoint with oil, because we do not live in Palestine or in the first century.[1] The therapeutic means of one climate and age are not necessarily the best to be adopted in another, but prayer belongs to all countries and all times, and the mutual confession of sins is often helpful. We must always distinguish between the letter and the spirit, the accidental adjunct and the eternal principle. If this passage has been perverted into the doctrine and practice of extreme unction regarded as a sacrament,[2] and of sacramental confession to a priest, it has only shared the fate of hundreds of other passages. There are few prominent texts on which the tottering structures of purely inferential

mind the sudden burst of rain after drought which fell in answer to prayer after the troubles caused by the attempt of Caligula to set up his statue in the Temple (Jos. *Antt.* xviii. 8, § 6). Analogous to this is the story of the Thundering Legion (Euseb. *H. E.* v. 5; Tert. *Apol.* 5), and the well-known story of Mr. Grimshaw. Hegesippus says of James himself, that it was supposed by the people that he caused rain to fall by his prayers.

[1] "Things which were practised and prescribed by Christ Himself and His Apostles are *not* of *perpetual obligation* unless they are conducive to an *end* which is of *perpetual necessity*."—Bp. Wordsworth, who instances feet-washing (John xiii. 14) and the Kiss of Peace (1 Thess. v. 26; 1 Pet. v. 14).

[2] Anointing with oil was provided for in the first Prayer-book of Edward VI., "if the sick man desire it"; but as no *miraculous* results can follow, and as oil is not specially valuable in our climate as a means of healing in *all* diseases, it was wisely dropped in the Prayer-book of 1552 (see Jer. Taylor's Preface to *Holy Dying*).

dogmas have not been reared. Thus do men build upon Divine foundations the hay and stubble of human fancies. And if the passage has thus been perverted in one direction by the growth of sacerdotalism, it has been perverted in another by the fanaticism of ignorance. Because the promises of healing given by St. James are unconditional, it has been assumed by some poor fanatics that no one need ever die, as though death, in God's good time, were not man's richest birthright, and as though every good man's prayer for any earthly blessing was not in itself made absolutely conditional on the will of God.[1] But neither for extreme unction, nor for sacramental confession, nor for sacerdotal absolution,[2] nor for fanatical extravagance, does this passage afford the slightest sanction. Such inferences are only possible to the exegesis which takes the sound of the words, and not their true meanings. The lessons which we must here learn are lessons of the blessedness of sympathy, and of holy intercourse, and of the humble confession of sin, and, above all, of prayer, at *all* times, but most of all in times of sickness. Our faith, too, may find encouragement in the efficacy of prayer for the achievement of results which even transcend the ordinary course of nature. In enforcing this faith by the example of Elijah,[3] St. James does so on the express ground that, saint though he was, and prophet though

[1] Œcumenius, on the other hand, has no warrant for confining the reference of the verse to miraculous healings in the days of the Apostles (the *χάρισμα ἰαμάτων*, 1 Cor. xii. 9).

[2] Even Cardinal Cajetan admits, with perfect frankness: "Haec verba non loquuntur de Sacramentali Unctione extremae unctionis—nec hic est sermo de confessione sacramentali."

[3] It is implied in 1 Kings xviii. 42, *seq.*, that Elijah prayed for rain. It was the Jewish tradition that he also prayed for the drought, but Scripture does not say so. He announced it (1 Kings xvii. 1).

he was, he was no supernatural being, but one "of like passions" with ourselves.

xii. Then, in one last weighty word, comes the solemn close of the Epistle.

"My brethren, if any one among you wander from the truth, and one convert him, know that he who has converted a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (v. 19, 20).

He has spoken many words of warning and condemnation against the worldliness, the violence, the forgetfulness of God, which were but too prevalent among Jewish and Christian communities, and he has given many an exhortation to patience, and dehortation from iniquity. But this last word is a word to those who were most faithful, and is meant to stimulate them to the best and most blessed of all duties—the endeavour to help and save the souls of others. No reward could equal that of success in such a task.[1] To hide as with the gracious veil of penitence and forgiveness the many sins of a sinner was a Christ-like service, and he who was enabled to render it would share in the joy of Christ. And may not the thought be at least involved that in covering the sins of another he would also be helping to cover his own—that he who waters others shall be watered also himself?[2]

[1] Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; lxxxv. 2; Neh. iv. 5; Prov. x. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 8. "He commends the correction of brothers from its *result*, that we may more eagerly devote ourselves to it" (Calvin). A faint analogy occurs in Yoma, f. 87 *a*, "Whoever leads many to righteousness, sin is not committed by his hands."

[2] "Whosoever destroyeth *one* soul of Israel, Scripture counts it to him as though he had destroyed the whole world; and whoso preserveth one soul of Israel, Scripture counts it as though he had preserved the whole world" (Sanhedrin, f. 37, *a*). R. Meyer said—"Great is repentance, because for the sake of one that truly repenteth, the whole world is

And there, as with a seal affixed to a testament,[1] he ends. He would leave that thought last in their minds, and would suffer neither greetings nor messages to weaken the force of the injunction, or the supremacy of the blessing by which he would encourage them to its fulfilment. "*Insigni doctrinâ, velut colophone epistolam absolvit.*"[2]

pardoned (Hos. xiv. 4)" (Yoma, f. 86, *b*). How much wiser and more controlled is the language of St. James!

[1] Herder. [2] Zuinglius.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ST. JAMES AND ST. PAUL ON FAITH AND WORKS.

"Thy works and alms and all thy good endeavour
Staid not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever."—MILTON.

OUR sketch of the Epistle of St. James cannot conclude without a few words on the famous passage in which, it has been supposed, the Bishop of Jerusalem deliberately contravenes and argues against the most characteristic formula of the Apostle of the Gentiles.[1]

Let us first place side by side the passages which are in most direct apparent contradiction:

"... *if Abraham were justified by works*, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God" (Rom. iv. 2).

"*Therefore, being justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

"By grace are ye saved *thro' faith ... not of works*, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

"*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*" (Rom. iii. 28).

"*Was not Abraham our father justified by works* when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (Jas. ii. 21).

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? *Can the faith save him?*" (Jas. ii. 14).

"... *Faith, if it hath not works, is* dead, being alone" (Jas. ii. 17).

"Ye see, then, *how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*" (Jas. ii. 24).

[1] I have consulted the treatment of this subject by Luther, Bengel, Jer. Taylor (Sermon iii. "*Fides formata*"), Barrow (*Sermon on Justify-*

It is hardly strange that the opposite character of these statements should have attracted deep attention, and of late years there have been two distinct views respecting them.

(1.) One is that the passages involve a real and even intentional contradiction.[1] Baur, while holding that St. James meant to oppose the formulæ of St. Paul, or of his School, yet speaks with moderation. He believes that St. James's arguments were not so much meant to be polemical as corrective of misapprehensions, and therefore that they were dictated by the true spirit of catholic unity. Others, however, and notably the advanced members of the Tübingen School, regard the Epistle as a bitter manifesto of Judaising Christians against the Paulinists.[2] The research and insight of Baur led him to a real discovery when he pointed out the importance of the contest between the Judaisers and the Paulinists. Those who pushed his views to an extreme were prepared to sacrifice the entire historical credibility of the Acts of the Apostles in order to make out that St. James and St. Paul, or at least their immediate followers, hated each other with irreconcilable opposition. They thought, in fact, that in the Clementine Homilies, with their strong animus against St. Paul, they had discovered the true key to the early history of the Church. They attributed

ing Faith), De Wette (whose note is quoted in Alford, *ad loc.*), Hare (*Vindication of Luther*), Bishop Lightfoot, Plumptre, Dean Bagot, Wordsworth, Ewald, Lange, Pfleiderer, Baur, Wiesinger, Huther, Schaff, Reuss, Immer (*N. Test. Theol.*), Neander, and other writers.

[1] Luther, Cyril Lucar, Ströbel, Kern, Baur, Schwegler, Renan.

[2] The notion that Jas. iii. 13—18, and the praise of the wisdom which is "earthly, unspiritual, demonish," is a reflection on 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15 (Hilgenfeld, *Einleit.* 536) is very baseless.

to the Apostles themselves heretical slanders which they would have rejected with astonished indignation. They think that three of the Apostles—St. James, St. John, and St. Jude—were Judaists, who not only took an impassioned part in the controversies which were excited by the actions of St. Paul, but have even recorded their abhorrence of his views upon the Sacred page. In their opinion, it is St. Paul at whom St. James is aiming one of the bitterest terms of Hebrew condemnation when he exclaims, "But art thou willing to recognise, *O empty person*,[1] that faith without works is dead?" The Epistle of St. Jude becomes, in their view, a specimen of the "hatred-breathing Epistles" which were despatched to the Jewish Churches by the heads of the Mother Church in Jerusalem, to teach Christians not only to repudiate, but to denounce the special "Gospel" of the Apostle of the Gentiles. According to their interpretation, St. John, the Apostle of Love, hurled forth against his great fellow-Apostle yet fiercer execration, and, in "cries of passionate hatred," described him as a False Apostle, a Balaam, a Jezebel, the founder of the Nicolaitans, and a teacher of crime and heresy. They, therefore, regard the addresses of the Apocalypse to the Seven Churches as manifestoes directed by a Judaist against the very Apostle by whose heroic labours those Churches had been founded.[2] The falsehood of this hypothesis has long been demonstrated. It only furnishes an illustration of the ease with which a theory, resting on a narrow basis of fact, may be pushed into complete extravagance. That St. Paul and St. James approached the great truths of Christi-

[1] ריקא, Raca. [2] Renan, *St. Paul*, p. 367.

anity from different points of view; that they did not adopt the same phrases in describing them; that they differed about various questions of theory and practice; even that they stood at the head of parties whose mutual bitterness they would have been the first to deplore—is clear from the Acts of the Apostles, and still more clear from scattered notices in the Epistles of St. Paul. But it is quite common for the adherents of great thinkers to exaggerate their differences, and fail to catch their spirit. Whatever may have been the tone of the Jerusalem Pharisees towards Gentile Christians who paid no regard to the ceremonial Law, we have the evidence of St. Paul himself,[1] as well as of public records of the Church, that between him and the other Apostles there reigned a spirit of mutual respect and mutual concession. The view, therefore, that St. James was trying, in the approved modern fashion, to "write down" St. Paul, may be finally dismissed.

(2.) The other view, which has recently been maintained by Bishop Lightfoot,[2] is that St. James is not thinking of St. Paul in any way; that his expressions have no reference to him whatever; and that he is only occupied with controversies which moved in an entirely different world of ideas. Now it is, I think, sufficiently proved that this view is *possible*. Evidence has been adduced to show that the question of faith and works was one which had been long and eagerly debated in the Jewish Schools, and that the names of Abraham, and even of Rahab,[3] as forming two marked contrasts, had

[1] Gal. ii. 9; Acts xv. 13—21; xxi. 17—25.

[2] *Galatians*, pp. 152—162. This is the view of Schneckenburger, Theile, Neander, Schaff, Theirsch, Hofmann, Huther, Lange, Plumptre.

[3] That Rahab was prominent in Jewish thought we see from Matt. i. 5.

constantly been introduced into these discussions. It is not, therefore, true to say that St. James *must* be thinking of St. Paul. The "solifidianism" of the Jews consisted in an exclusive trust in their Monotheism, their descent from Abraham, their circumcision, and their possession of the Law.[1] Justin Martyr alludes to Jews who, "although they were sinners, yet deceived themselves by saying that, if they knew God, He would not impute sin to them."[2] If, then, the early date of the Epistle could be otherwise demonstrated, the question as to any designed opposition between the two Apostles would fall to the ground, and we should only have to show whether it is possible to reconcile independent statements which at first appear to be mutually exclusive. It is so important to establish this fact—so important to prove that whatever be the date of the Epistle, St. James *may* be refuting the notion of *a* justification by faith which is not that described by St. Paul, but a blind Judaic trust in privileges and observances—that it will be worth while to show from the Talmud how prevalent these views were in the Jewish world.

a. Thus, as regards *Monotheism*, we find that in repeating the Shemâ, or daily prayer, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God" (Deut. vi. 4); "whosoever prolongs the utterance of the word One (*echad*) shall have his days and years prolonged to him" (Berachoth, f. 13, *b*).

When Akhiva was martyred by having his flesh torn from him, he died uttering this word "One;" and then came a Bath Kol, which said, "Blessed art thou, Rabbi

[1] Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 33; Rom. ii. 17—20, and compare Jer. vii. 4.
[2] Just. Mart. *Dial.* § 141.

Akhiva, for thy soul and the word One. left thy body together" (id. f. 61, *b*).

β. Again, as regards *circumcision :*

"Though Abraham kept all the commandments, including the whole ceremonial law (Kiddushin, f. 82, *a*), still he was not *perfect* till he was circumcised" (Nedarim, f. 31, *b*).

"So great is circumcision, that thirteen covenants were made concerning it" (Nedarim, f. 31, *b*).

Many Jews relied less on their observances than on their possession of special privileges.

γ. As regards their *national position*, they said that God had given to Israel three precious gifts—the Law, the land of Israel, and the world to come;[1] that all Israelites were princes,[2] all holy,[3] all philosophers, "full of meritorious works as a pomegranate of pips,"[4] and that it was as impossible for the world to be without them as to be without air.[5] They even ventured to say that "All Israelites have a portion in the world to come, as it is written, And thy people are all righteous, they shall inherit the land" (Is. lx. 21). (Sanhedrin, f. 90, *a*.)

"The world was created only for Israel: none are called the children of God but Israel: none are beloved before God but Israel" (Gerim, 1).

δ. In fact, on the testimony of the Talmud itself, *externalism* had triumphed in the heart of the Jewish Church. The High Priests, though they were, according to the best Jewish testimony, shameful examples of greed, simony, luxury, gluttony, pride, and violence, were yet quite content with themselves if they were

[1] Berachoth, f. 5, *a*. [2] Shabbath, f. 57, *a*. [3] Shabbath, f. 86, *a*.
[4] The Machsor for Pentecost. [5] Taanith, f. 3, *b*.

rigorists in the minutiæ of Levitism instead of examples of ideal righteousness. In the tract Sota (47, *b*) there is a bitter complaint that moral worth was disregarded, and no regard paid to anything but external service. In another tract (Yoma, 23, *a*) we are told that outward observance was more highly esteemed than inward purity, and that murder itself was considered venial in comparison with a ceremonial defilement of the Temple.[1] St. James was daily familiar with this spectacle of men who, living in defiance of every moral law, yet thought to win salvation by the easy mechanism of ceremonial scrupulosity. Against such mechanical conceptions of holiness his Epistle would have told with great power.

(3.) But believing as I do, on other grounds, that the Epistle was written shortly before St. James's death, it becomes difficult to suppose that St. James's argument in favour of "justification by works" bears *no relation whatever* to the great argumentative Epistles in which St. Paul had established the truth of Justification by Faith. And while I freely concede that the question of faith and works was frequently discussed in the Jewish Schools, and with special reference to the life of Abraham, there is not, I think, sufficient evidence that the doctrine had ever been so distinctly formulated, and certainly it had never been so fully and powerfully discussed, as it was in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians.[2] If we are right in supposing that St. James wrote his Epistle about

[1] For the various Talmudic quotations see Grätz, iii. 321, 322, and the works of Schöttgen, Meuschen, Eisenmenger, Hershon, Hamburger, &c. No less than fourteen of the Treatises of the Talmud, both Mishna and Gemara, have now been translated into French by Moïse Schwab.

[2] "Und sicher kann man nicht leugnen dass die vom Apostel Paulus

the year 61 or 62, then some years had elapsed since St. Paul had sent forth these great Epistles. Considering that emissaries, who came from Jerusalem—who came ostensibly from James—who boasted, though not always truly, of his sanction and authority—who carried with them letters which, if not written by him, were written by leading personages in the Church of which he was the Bishop—had penetrated into many of the communities founded by St. Paul, and had half-undone his work by reducing his converts to the legal bondage from which he had set them free—it becomes almost inconceivable that St. James, even if he had not seen copies of one or other of those Epistles, should not at least have been familiar with the general drift of views which had become notorious wherever the name of Christ was preached. Now, the teaching of St. Paul was intensely original. It was not easy for any one to grasp its full meaning; and it was quite impossible for any hostile and prejudiced person to understand it at all. To many, educated in the absorbing prejudices of Judaism, his opinions about the Law would have appeared dubious. Their indignation would have been kindled by the fiery and almost contemptuous boldness of some of the expressions which he wrote and published, and which he must therefore have frequently let fall in the heat of controversy. In the Church of Jerusalem it is hardly likely that the dialectics of St. Paul were lovingly or patiently studied. St. James himself is our witness to the fact that there, and throughout the Ghettos of the world, the views of the great missionary were systematically

aufgestellbe Lehre über dem Glauben zu dieser Abhandlung die nächste Veranlassung gab" (Ewald, *Die Sendschreiben*, ii. p. 198).

misrepresented. To the ordinary Jewish Christian he was known as one who constantly taught "*apostasy from Moses*," as one who "*forbad*" not only Gentiles, but "all Jews," to circumcise their children, and "to walk according to the customs."[1] As regards Jews, the charge was false. St. Paul never interfered with them; and since he himself kept the general provisions of the Law as a national duty—greatly as, to him, they must have lost their significance—we have every reason to suppose that he would have advised any Jew who consulted him to do the same. But any lie, however often refuted, is good enough for party-spirit; and no amount of explanation, however simple and sincere, will prevent the grossest misrepresentations of opinion from being used for their own purposes by religious partisans. Further than this, it is not only possible, but probable, that some of St. Paul's followers *did* misinterpret his characteristic expressions, did make a bad and even dangerous use of them. We might easily imagine that this would be the case, because every day shows us how easy it is, first to turn any expression into a watchcry, then to empty it of all significance, and finally to use it in a sense entirely alien from that in which it was originally used. Here again we are not left to conjecture. We have the express testimony of the second Epistle of St. Peter that there were those who wrested the difficult parts of St. Paul's Epistles, as they did also the rest of the Scriptures, *to their own perdition*. Now, if it be merely snatched up as a formula—without an earnest desire to understand it, without the thought which was necessary to see it in its proper perspective—there is no expression more liable

[1] Acts xxi. 21.

to be perverted than St. Paul's characteristic formula of "Justification by Faith." In his sense of the words it is one of the deepest and most essential truths of Christianity; but in his sense only. And he had used both words, "Justification" and "Faith," in meanings which made them parts of one great system of thoughts. It is owing to this that his words have been constantly misunderstood, and are to this day deplorably misinterpreted. To this day there are some who use expressions so objectionable as "works are deadly." There were even in the days of the Apostles, as there have been since, Nicolaitans and other Antinomians, who, on the claim of possessing faith, have set themselves in superiority to the moral law, and asserted a licence to commit all ungodliness. Now, if St. James had come across such men, or had been told of their existence, or had even met with Jewish Christians who, without understanding St. Paul's teaching, were perplexed by the ignorant repetition of the formula which was selected to represent it, would there have been anything derogatory to the character of St. James, or unworthy of his position, in the endeavour to refute the perversions to which this formula was liable? Is it not a high service to expose the empty use of any expression which has been degraded to the purposes of cant and faction? Would not St. Paul have rejoiced that such a task should have been performed? Would he not have performed it himself, if circumstances had led him to see that it was needful? It is, indeed, improbable that he would in that case have used all the expressions which St. James has used; but his pastoral Epistles are sufficient to prove that he would have cordially concurred with him in his general

opinion. I believe, then, with many of the Fathers, that St. James wrote this passage with the express intention of correcting false inferences from the true teaching of St. Paul;[1] and that, though there is no contradiction between them, there is a certain antithesis —a traceable difference in the types of dogma which they respectively adopted.[2]

If the arguments of St. James had been intended for a refutation of St. Paul himself, they would have been singularly ineffectual. They do not fathom the depths of his meaning; they deal with uses of his words which are more superficial and less specifically Christian. A polemical argument must, as such, be a failure if every word which the writer says could be adopted by the person against whom he is writing. It is only as the correction of onesided and erroneous *inferences* from St. Paul's teaching, drawn by honest ignorance or circulated by hostile malice, that the argument of St. James has a value, which the Church of all ages has rejoiced to recognise.

But setting aside the question of *conscious* opposition between the views of the two Apostles, as one which lies outside the range of proof, we have to ask the far more important question, How is their language reconcilable with the truth of God? How can it be said with equal confidence

"Ye are saved *through* faith .... *not of works*" (Eph. ii. 8, 9), and

"Ye see .... that *by works a man is justified*, and *not by faith only*" (James ii. 24)?

And here I must entirely differ from Luther in the

[1] This is the view adopted by Bp. Bull in his *Harmonia Apostolica*.

[2] So Schmid, Wiesinger, &c.

view that the two statements, in the senses intended by their authors, are irreconcilable.[1] The reconciliation is easy when we see that St. James is using all three words—Faith, Works, Justification—in a different sense to different persons, with different illustrations, under different circumstances; and when we find, further, that St. James, in other passages, insists no less than St. Paul on the importance of faith; and St. Paul, no less than St. James, on the necessity of works.

i. For by *Faith* St. Paul never means dead faith (*fides informis*) at all. He means, (1) in the lowest sense of the word, general trust in God (*assensus, fiducia*);[2] then (2) self-surrender to God's will;[3] (3) in its highest, and most Pauline sense—the sense in which he uses it when he speaks of "Justification by Faith"—it is self-surrender which has deepened into sanctification; it is a living power of good in every phase of life; it is *unio mystica*, a mystical incorporation with Christ in unity of love and life.[4] But this application of the word was peculiar to St. Paul, and St. James does not adopt it. He meant by faith in *this* passage a mere theoretical belief—belief which may exist without any germinant life—belief which may stop short at a verbal profession of Jewish orthodoxy—belief

[1] Luther says: "Plures sudarunt in Epistolâ Jacobi ut cum Paulo concordarent . . . sed minus feliciter, *sunt enim contraria*, 'fides justificat' 'fides non justificat'—qui hæc rite conjungere potest, huic vitam meam imponam, et fatuum me nominare permittam" (*Colloq.* ii. 202). Ströbel, in a review of Wiesinger, says, "No matter in what sense we take the Epistle of St. James, it is always in conflict with the remaining parts of Holy Writ."

[2] Rom. iv. 18; as in Heb. xii. 1.

[3] Rom. x. 9; Phil. iii. 7.

[4] Rom. xii. 5; Phil. i. 21; 1 Cor. vi. 17. See *Life and Work of St. Paul*, ii. 188—193; Pfleiderer, *Paulinismus*, § 5; Baur, *Paul.* ii. 149; *Neu Test. Theol.* i. 176.

which does not even go so far as that of demons—belief which, taken alone, is so inappreciable in value that he compares it to a charity which speaks words of idle comfort and does not give.[1]

ii. Again, by *Works* the two writers meant very different things. St. Paul was thinking mainly of those works which stood high in the estimation of his Jewish opponents; he meant the works and observances of the Levitical and ceremonial Law—new moons, sabbaths, sacrifices, ablutions, meats, drinks, phylacteries, and so forth;—or, at the very highest, works of ordinary duty, "deeds of the Law," untouched by emotion, not springing from love to God. He did *not* mean, as St. James did, works of love and goodness done in obedience to the royal law,[2] those works which spring from a true and lively faith, which *must* spring from it, which it is as impossible to sever from it as it is to sever from fire its light and heat.[3]

iii. And, finally, the sense of the word *Justification* in St. Paul moves in a higher plane than that in which it is used by St. James. St. Paul uses the word in a special, a technical, a theological sense, to express the righteousness of God, which, by a judgment of acquittal, pronounced once for all in the expiatory death of Christ, He imputes to guilty man. St. James uses the word in the much simpler sense of our being declared and shown to be righteous—not indeed, as many have said, before

[1] In other passages "faith" connotes somewhat more than this, namely, trust in God (i. 5; v. 15).

[2] Ja. i. 25; ii. 12.

[3] If St. Paul attaches to "*works*" a lower meaning than St. James, St. James attaches to "*faith*" a lower meaning than St. Paul; but there can be no confusion about the results, because each writer uses the words in senses which he makes perfectly clear.

men only[1]—but righteous before God, as those whose life is in accordance with their belief.[2] St. Paul speaks of the justification which begins for the sinner by the trustful acceptance of his reconciliation to God in Christ, and which attains its perfect stage when the believer is indeed "in Christ"—when Christ has become to him a new nature and a quickening spirit. St. James speaks of the justification of the believer by his producing such works as are the sole possible demonstration of the vitality of his indwelling faith.[3]

Briefly, then, it may be said that the works which St. Paul thinks of are the works of the Law, those of St. James the works of godliness; that St. Paul speaks of deep and mystic faith, St. James of theoretic belief; that St. Paul has in view the initial justification of a sinner, St. James the complete justification of a believer.[4]

iv. In accordance with this view, although both

[1] This common explanation (Calvin, Grotius, Baumgarten, &c.) is quite untenable. There is not a word in St. James to indicate that he is only thinking of justification before men; and the notion that he is, is refuted by ver. 14.

[2] As our Lord also said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified" (Matt. xii. 37); and St. Paul himself, in Rom. ii. 13, "the *doers* of the law shall be *justified*." Had this sentence occurred in St. James, how eagerly would it have been seized upon as a flat contradiction of Rom. iii. 20, "Therefore, from the works of the law shall *no* flesh be justified before Him." But if the same author can thus in the same Epistle use the same word in different senses, what difficulty can there be in supposing that this may be done by *different* writers, without any hostile intention?

[3] "To justify" (δικαιοῦν צדק) has in the Bible two meanings: (1) "To pronounce the innocent righteous in accordance with his innocence" (Ex. xxiii. 7; Prov. xvii. 15; Is. v. 23; Matt. xii. 37, &c.); (2) to make righteous, or lead to righteousness (Dan. xii. 31; Is. liii. 11; and Rom. *passim*). In St. James true faith is imputed as righteousness, but justification follows works as the proof of true faith (Lange).

[4] "Works," says Luther, "do not make us righteous, but cause us to be declared righteous" (Luke xvii. 9, 10).

Apostles refer, for illustration of their views, to the life of the Patriarch who lived so many centuries before the delivery of the Law, they do *not* refer to the same events in his life. St. Paul illustrates his position by Abraham's belief in God's promise that he should have a son, when against hope he believed in hope.[1] St. James, taking the life and the faith of Abraham, so to speak, "much lower down the stream," shows how Abraham, many years afterwards, was justified as a believer, justified by works, when he gave the crowning proof of his obedience by the willingness to slay even his only son and the heir of the promise.[2] It is obviously as true to say that Abraham in that act was (in the ordinary meaning of the words) justified by faith, as that he was justified by works. He was justified by faith, because nothing but his faith could have led him to such perfect endurance in the hour of trial; he was justified by works, because, without his works, there could have been no proof that his faith existed. Faith and works, in this sense, are, in fact, inseparably intertwined. There cannot be such works without faith; there cannot be such faith without works. It is really the same

[1] Rom. iv. 3, 9, 22; Gen. xv. 6.

[2] James ii. 23; Gen. xxii. 12. See Huther *ad loc.* A remarkable Talmudic story tells us that Satan slandered Abraham before God, saying that God had given him a son when he was a hundred years old, and he had not even spared a dove for sacrifice. God answers that Abraham would not spare even his son if required. So God said, "Take now thy son" (*as if a king should say to his bravest warrior, Fight now this hardest battle of all*), "for fear it should be said that thy former trials were easy." "I have two sons," answered Abraham. "*Take thine only son.*" "Each," he answered, "is the only son of his mother." "*Take him whom thou lovest.*" "I love them both." Then God said, "*Take Isaac.*" Abraham obeyed, and on the way Satan met him, and tried to make him murmur. Abraham answered, "*I will walk in mine integrity*" (Sanhedrin, f. 89, *b*).

thing to say that a man is (in one or other of the senses of the word) justified by such a faith as must from its very nature issue in good works, or by such works as can only issue from a true and lively faith. Nor is it surprising (as we have seen) that the question should be illustrated by the example of Abraham, whose life and faith were constantly discussed in their minutest particulars by the Jewish Rabbis, and who was asserted to have not only been saved by faith, but to have observed even the oral commandments centuries before they were delivered.[1] If St. James also takes the instance of Rahab, this does not involve a necessary reference to the remark in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that she, too, was saved by faith. For the example of Rahab was also greatly discussed in the Jewish schools, and for her faith and works it was said that no less than eight prophets, who were also priests, had sprung from her, and that Huldah, the prophetess, was one of her descendants.[2]

v. And the superficial contradiction between the Apostles vanishes to nothing when we bear in mind that St. Paul is dealing with the vain confidence of legalism, St. James with the vain confidence of orthodoxy. St. Paul was writing to Gentile Churches to prevent them from being seduced into trusting for salvation to the adoption of external badges and ceremonials, or to good deeds done in a spirit of servile fear. St. James is arguing either with Jewish bigots who thought that a profession of Monotheism and a participation in Jewish privileges[3] would save them; or with mistaken Paulinists who had

[1] Yoma, f. 28, *b*; Kiddushin, f. 82, *a*.
[2] Meggillah, f. 14, *b*.
[3] Matt. iii. 9.

snatched up a formula which they did not understand, and who thought that justification could be severed from sanctification—that a saving faith was possible without the holiness of an accordant life. St. Paul is contrasting faith in Christ with works of the Law; St. James is contrasting a dead unreal faith with a faith which evidences its reality by holy works. St. Paul's arguments were meant to overthrow the vain confidence of the Pharisee[1]; St. James's tell equally against the Jew who pillowed his hopes on fruitless orthodoxy, and the Antinomian who identified saving faith with barren profession.

For, lastly, there is no difficulty in showing that both as regards faith and works the Apostles, however much their expressions may differ, were substantially at one.

(i.) Thus as regards FAITH, St. James says in this very chapter:—

"And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith And *Abraham believed God*, and it was reckoned to him for *righteousness*"[2] (ii. 23).

And St. Paul quotes the same verse in the same words (Rom. iv. 3), with the introduction "What saith the Scripture?"

So little does St. James exclude faith, that he speaks of "the testing of faith" as working out that "endurance" which is the appointed path of perfectionment (i. 3); he urges the duty of prayer offered in

[1] Comp. Acts xiii. 39.

[2] "Magnum opus sed ex Fide" (Aug. on Ps. xxxi.). Ewald briefly says, "Faith is the first and most necessary thing; this is here also taken for granted throughout; but it must prove its existence by corresponding works, otherwise man cannot obtain Divine justification and final redemption" (*Die Sendschreiben*, ii. 199).

unwavering faith as the means of obtaining Divine wisdom (i. 6); he describes Christianity as being the "holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of the Glory" (ii. 1); he speaks of the poor as being heirs of the Kingdom because they are rich in faith (ii. 5); he implies the absolute necessity of faith co-existing with works—working with them, receiving its perfection from them (ii. 22, 26), and does not imagine the possibility of such works as he contemplates except as the visible proofs of an invisible faith.

(ii.) And exactly as St. James neither ignores nor underestimates faith, so neither does St. Paul ignore nor underestimate the value and necessity of good WORKS. He speaks of God as "being able to make all joy abound in us, that having in all things always all sufficiency (*αὐτάρκειαν*) we may abound unto every good work" (2 Cor. ix. 8). He speaks of good works as the appointed path in which we are predestined to walk (Eph. ii. 10). He describes the walking "in every good work, bearing fruit," as being the worthy walk, and the walk which pleases God (Col. i. 10). He prays that the Lord Jesus may stablish the hearts of His converts in every good word and work (2 Thess. ii. 17). He devotes a practical section in every Epistle to the inculcation of Christian duties and virtues (Rom. xii.—xvi.; 1 Cor. xvi.; 2 Cor. ix.; Gal. v. 6; Eph. v., vi.; Phil. iv.; Col. iii., iv., &c.). He devotes the almost exclusive exhortations of his very latest Epistles to impress on all classes of his converts the blessedness of faithful working (1 Tim. ii. 10, v. 10, vi. 18; 2 Tim. iii. 17; Tit. ii. 7—14, iii. 8). Nay, more, in the very Epistle of which the central idea is Justification by Faith, he does not scruple to use the word justification

in the less specific sense of St. James, and to write that "*the doers of the Law shall be justified*"[1]—a sentence which St. James might have adopted as his text. Both Apostles would have freely conceded that (in a certain sense) faith without works is mere orthodoxy, and works without faith mere legal righteousness.

Surely after these proofs that for all practical purposes the Apostle of the Gentiles and the Bishop of the Circumcised are fundamentally at one—that they agree in thought, though they differ in expression, or at least that their minor differences are merged in a higher unity—it is unjustifiable to speak as though, on this subject at any rate, there was any bitter controversy between them. They approached the truths of Christianity from different sides; they looked at them under different aspects; they lived amid different surroundings; they were arguing against different errors; they used different phraseology. The antithesis between them only lies in regions of literary expression; it in no way affects the duty or the theory of the Christian life. There is not a word which St. Paul wrote on these topics which would not have been accepted after a little explanation by St. James, though he might have preferred to alter some of the expressions which St. Paul employed. There is not a word which St. James wrote on them which—when explained in St. James's sense—St. Paul would not have endorsed. It is true, as St. Paul wrote, that we are "justified by faith"; it is true, as St. James wrote, that "we cannot be justified without works." Amid the seeming verbal contradictions there is a real agreement. Both Apostles

[1] Rom. ii. 13.

held identical views respecting the will of God, the regeneration of man, and the destiny of the redeemed.[1] The ideal which each accepted was so nearly the same, that St. James's brief sketch of the Wisdom from above might be hung as a beautiful companion picture to St. Paul's glorious description of Heavenly charity. Both would have agreed, heart and soul, in the simple and awful moral truth of such passages as these:—

"So speak and so do as they who shall be judged by the law of liberty." (Ja. ii. 12.)

"Faith apart from works is dead, by itself." (Ja. ii. 17, 26.)

"The work of each shall become manifest, for the day shall reveal it." (1 Cor. iii. 13.)

"God shall give to each according to his works." (Rom. ii. 6—10.)

"We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ that each may obtain the things done by the instrumentality of the body, with reference to the things he did, whether good, or evil." (2 Cor. v. 10.)

Both, again, would have accepted heart and soul such language as that of St. John, in which these superficial discrepancies are finally reconciled—"If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John i. 6); —or as that of St. Paul himself in the very Epistle in which he first worked out the sketch of his great scheme, and in the three different conclusions to his own favourite and thrice-repeated formula:—

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision,"—

[1] See *supra*, pp. 40, 48, the note on Jas. i. 18.

But, "Faith working effectually by means of love." (Gal. v. 6.)

But, "A new creature." (Gal. vi. 15.)

But, "An observance of the commandments of God." (1 Cor. vii. 19.)

Had St. Paul written, as Luther wrote for him, that man is justified "by Faith *only*"—had he been in this sense a Solifidian—then there would have been a more apparent contradiction between him and St. James. But what St. Paul said was, "Therefore we reckon that a man is justified *by faith*, apart from the works of the Law" (Rom. iii. 28), and it was Luther who ventured to interpolate the word "alone"—the "word *alone*," as Erasmus calls it—"stoned with so many shoutings"—("Vox *sola* tot clamoribus lapidata"). In St. James's sense of faith this would have indeed been open to the contradiction (ii. 24) "Not by faith alone" (*οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον*). But even had St. Paul used the word "alone" he would have said what is true in *his* sense of the words, and in the sense in which they are adopted in the Articles of our Church. His words only become untrue when they are transferred into the different senses in which they are used by his brother Apostle.[1]

In this, as in so many other cases, we may thank God that the truth has been revealed to us under many lights; and that, by a diversity of gifts, the Spirit ministered to each Apostle severally as He would, inspiring the one to deepen our spiritual life by the solemn truth that Works cannot justify apart from Faith; and the other to stimulate our efforts after a holy life by the no less solemn truth that Faith cannot

[1] See Article IX., and on it Bishop Forbes, Bishop Harold Browne, &c.

justify us unless it be the living faith which is shown by Works. There is, in the diversity, a deeper unity. The Church, thank God, is "*Circumamicta varietatibus*"—clothed in raiment of many hues. St. Paul had dwelt prominently on Faith; St. Peter dwells much on Hope; St. John insists most of all on Love. But the Christian life is the synthesis of these Divine graces, and the Works of which St. James so vehemently impresses the necessity, are works which are the combined result of operative faith, of constraining love, and of purifying hope.[1]

[1] See an excellent tract on St. Paul and St. James by Dean Bagot.

Book V.

THE EARLIER LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. JOHN.

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THE EARLIER LIFE AND WORKS OF ST JOHN.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ST. JOHN.

"For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear—believe the aged friend—
Is just our chance of the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is."—
BROWNING, *A Death in the Desert.*

"AND recognising the grace given to me, James, and Kephas, and *John*, who are thought to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we to the Gentiles, but they to the circumcision"[1]—

So wrote St. Paul to the Galatians, in one of the passages of the New Testament, which—apart from the Gospels—has a deeper personal interest, and which throws more light on the condition of the Church in the days of the Apostles than any other.[2] It is an inestimable privilege to the Church that we possess writings of each of these three Pillar-Apostles—as well as of that untimely-born Apostle on whose daring originality they were inclined to look with alarm, until he had fully set forth to them that view of the Gospel which was emphatically "*his* Gospel,"[3] and which he had learnt "neither from men nor by the instrumen-

[1] Gal. ii. 9.
[2] Gal. i. 11—ii. 21.
[3] "My Gospel," 1 Cor. xi. 23. *τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω* (Gal. ii. 2).

tality of man."[1] We are thus enabled to see the Gospel in the fourfold aspect in which it appeared to four men, —each specially enlightened by the Spirit of God, but each limited by individual conditions, because each received the treasure in earthen vessels. The minds of men inevitably differ. The individuality of each man—his subjectivity—his capacity to receive truth —his power of expressing it—all differ. Hence the truths which he utters, since they are uttered in human language, must be more or less differentiated by human peculiarities, and hence arises a gracious and fruitful variety, not a perplexing contradiction. Had the Apostles been bad men, had there been in their hearts the least tinge of spiritual or moral falsity, the pure stream of truth would have been corrupted by evil admixtures; but since they were sincere and noble men, the individuality with which the style and method of each is stamped so far from being a loss to us is a peculiar gain. No one man, unless his powers had been dilated almost to infinitude, would have been able to set forth to myriads of different souls the perfection of many-sided truths. It was a blessed ordinance of God which enables us to hear the words of revelation spoken by so many noble voices in so many differing tones.

We see from St. Paul's allusion, that twenty years after the Resurrection[2] the three Pillar-Apostles, at the date of his conference with them, were at Jerusalem, and were still regarded as the chief representatives of Jewish Christianity. But their Judaic sympathies were felt in very different degrees. St. James repre-

[1] Gal. i. 1, *οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου*, 1 Cor. xi. 23; xv. 3.

[2] About A.D. 52.

sents Christianity on its most Judaic side—spiritualising its morals, but assuming rather than expounding its most specific truths. He wrote exactly as we should have expected a man to write who was a Nazarite, a late convert, a Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, a daily frequenter of the Temple, a man in the highest repute among the Jews themselves, a man who, for more than a quarter of a century, lived in the focus of the most powerful Judaic influences. He was the acknowledged leader of those converts who were least willing to break loose from the Levitic law and the tradition of the fathers. St. Peter, on the other hand, became less and less a representative of the narrower phase of Judaic Christianity—more and more, as life advanced, the Apostle of Catholicity. The vein of timidity which, in his natural temperament, was so strangely mixed with courage—the plasticity which gave to his conduct a Judaic colouring so long as he was surrounded by the elders at Jerusalem, or by emissaries who came from James to Antioch—caused him to be long regarded by the converted Jews (undoubtedly against his will) as a party leader. Yet he was among the earliest to see the universality of the Gospel message, and he flung himself with ardour into the support of St. Paul's effort to emancipate the Gentiles from Levitic observances. And when he began his missionary journeys, his thoughts widened more and more until, as we find from his Epistle, he was enabled to accept unreservedly the teachings of St. Paul, while he divests them of their antithetical character, and avoids their more controversial formulæ. When we combine the teaching of St. James and St. Paul, we find those contrasted yet complementary truths which

were necessary to the full apprehension of the Catholic Faith in its manifold applicability to human needs. St. Peter occupies an intermediate and conciliatory position between these two extremes—more progressive than St. James, less daringly original and independent than St. Paul. But to utter the final word of Christian revelation—to drop, as it were, the great keystone, which was still needed to complete and compact the wide arch of Truth—was reserved as the special glory of the Beloved Disciple. And this was the crowning work of that old age which, as a peculiar blessing to the Church of Christ, was probably prolonged to witness the dawn of the second century of the Christian Church.[1]

But in St. John too we see that growth of spiritual enlightenment which made his life an unbroken education. In his latest writings we find a deeper insight into the truth than it would have been possible for him to attain before God had "shown him all things in the slow history of their ripening." The "Son of Thunder" of the Synoptic Gospels had the lessons of many years to learn before he could become the St. John who in Patmos saw the Apocalypse. The St. John who saw the Apocalypse had *still* the lessons of many years to learn, and the fall of Jerusalem to witness, before he could gaze on the world from the snowy summit of ninety winters, and become the Evangelist of the fourth Gospel, the Apostle of Christian Love.

And yet the days of St. John were not divided from each other by any overpowering crisis, but were, from first to last,

"Bound each to each by natural piety."

[1] Qui in secreta divinae se nativitatis immergens *ausus est dicere quod cuncta saecula nesciebant*, "In principio erat verbum" (Jer. *in Isa.* lvi. 4).

In the life of St. Paul the vision on the road to Damascus had cleft a deep chasm between his earlier and later years. The *character* of the Apostle retained the same elements, but his *opinions* were suddenly revolutionised. Paul the Apostle could only look back with an agony of remorse on the thoughts and deeds of Saul the Inquisitor. Like Augustine and Luther, he is a type of the ardent natures which are brought to God and to the service of the truth by a spasm of sudden change. But St. John was one of those pure saints of whom the grace of God takes early hold, and in whose life, as in those of Thomas à Kempis and Melancthon, "reason and religion run together like warp and woof to weave the web of a holy life." To him, from earliest days, the words of the poet are beautifully applicable—

> "There are who ask not if thine eye
> Be on them; who, in love and truth,
> Where no misgiving is, rely
> Upon the genial sense of youth:
> Glad hearts! without reproach or blot,
> Who do thy work, and know it not;
> Oh, if through confidence misplaced
> They fail, thy saving arm, dread Power! around them cast."

Never, perhaps, was a more glorious destiny reserved for any man, or a destiny more unlike what he could have conceived possible, than that which was awaiting the Apostle, when he played as a boy beside his father's boat on the bright strip of sand which still marks the site of Bethsaida. His father was Zabdia or Zebedee, of whom we know nothing more than that he was a fisherman sufficiently well-to-do to have hired servants of his own.[1] He was thus in more prosperous circum-

[1] Mark i. 20.

stances than his partner Jonas, the father of Peter and Andrew. His wife was Salome, sister of the Virgin Mary. The fact that she was one of those who ministered to the Lord of her substance, and also bought large stores of spices for His grave, are additional signs that Zabdia and his wife were not poor. Their sons were James and John, who were thus first cousins of our Lord according to the flesh.[1]

We catch no glimpse of John till we see him among the disciples of the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan. We are told however that, in his manhood, he appeared to the learned Sanhedrists of Jerusalem to be a "simple and unlettered" man.[2] Doubtless the term which they actually used was the contemptuous *am-haarets*, a technical expression far more scornful than its literal translation, "people of the land."[3] It is clear, therefore, that he had never been what they called "a pupil of the wise," and had not been trained in that cumbrous system of the Oral Law which they regarded as the

[1] Nicephorus and others rightly call Zebedee *ἰδιοναύκληρον*, "an independent fisherman with a ship of his own." What St. Chrysostom (*Hom.* i. *in Joann.*) says of the extreme poverty and humility of his lot (*οὐδὲν πενέστερον οὐδὲ ἀτελέστερον*, κ.τ.λ.) is rhetorical exaggeration (see Lampe, *Prolegomena*, p. 5). The Lake of Galilee was extraordinarily rich in fish, some of which were regarded as great delicacies, and—like the *coracinus*—were extremely rare. The trade in fish at Tiberias, Sepphoris, Tarichеæ, and especially at Jerusalem, was so active that a leading fisherman like Zabdia must have been almost rich.

[2] Acts iv. 13. A man was called a mere ignoramus (*am-haarets*) even if he knew the Scripture and the Mishna, but had never been one of the "pupils of the wise" (*Thalmidî hachakamîm*). If he knew only the Scriptures, he was called "an empty cistern" (*bôr*) (Wagenseil, *Sota*, p. 517). The *idiotes* is one who is no authority on a subject (see Orig. *c. Cels.* i. 30). Augustine calls the Apostles "ineruditos . . . non peritos grammaticae, non arinatos dialectica, non rhetorica inflatos" (*De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 5).

[3] For the meaning and associations of this word see Dr. McCaul, *Old Paths*, pp. 458—464.

only learning. It was well for him that he had not. The Rabbinism of that day was nothing better than a system of scholastic pedantry, impotent for every spiritual end, like many another vaunted system of purely verbal orthodoxy, yet tending to inflate the minds of its votaries with the conceit of knowledge without the reality. Of such learning it might well be said, in the words of Heraclitus, that "it teaches nothing."[1]

On the other hand, we see from St. John's own writings that he was a man of consummate natural gifts, and that he had been so far well educated as to be acquainted with both Greek and Hebrew,[2] of which the latter was not an ordinary acquirement even of well-educated Jews. Apart from his unequalled capacity for the reception of spiritual grace, his natural gifts appear in his deep insight into the human heart; in the dramatic power with which, by a few touches, he sets before us the most vivid conception of the most varied characters; in his style, apparently so simple yet really so profound—a style supremely beautiful, yet unlike that of any other writer, whether sacred or profane; and, above all, in the fact that he was a fit and chosen vessel for that consummate truth—the Incarnation of the Word of God. That truth, while with one swift stroke it summarised the speculations of Alexandrian theosophy, became in its turn the starting-point for the most sacred utterances of all Christian thinkers till the end of time.

His native Galilee was inhabited by the bravest and

[1] *πολυμαθίη οὐ διδάσκει* (Heracl.).

[2] The quotations of St. John in the Gospel are not always taken direct from the LXX., but are sometimes altered into more direct accordance with the Hebrew (xix. 37; vi. 45; xiii. 18).

truest race in Palestine.[1] They were remarkable for faithfulness to their theocratic nationality. They detested and were ashamed of alike the Roman dominion and the Herodian satrapy which was its outward sign. Their temperaments were full of an enthusiasm which easily caught fire. The revolt of Judas of Galilee against the registrations of Quirinus showed the indignation with which Galileans contemplated the reduction of the Holy Land to the degraded position of a Roman province. The watchword of that uprising was that the Chosen People should have "no Lord or master but God." Wild and hopeless as the insurrection was, and terribly as it was avenged, its failure was so far from quenching the spirit of patriotism by which it had been instigated, that it was not difficult for the sons of Judas long years afterwards[2] to fan the hot embers into flame.[3] The revolt of Judas took place when St. John was about twelve years old—the age at which a Jewish boy began to enter on the responsibilities of manhood. It was impossible that an event which produced so widespread an agitation should have failed to leave an impression on his memory. His sympathies must have been with the aims, if not with the acts, of the daring patriot. In both the sons of Zebedee we trace a certain fiery vehemence, and this it was which earned for them from the Lord the title of "Boanerges."[4] It is probable

[1] Jos. *Antt.* xviii. 1, § 1, 6; *B. J.* ii. 8, § 1.

[2] A.D. 8 of our era.

[3] In A.D. 47 and A.D. 66.

[4] Boanerges, "*Beni-regesh*" (Mark iii. 17). No doubt the title was earned by the fire and impetuosity of their nature; not because they were, as Theophylact says, "mighty heralds and divines" (Theophyl. in *Mark* i.; Epiphan. *Haer.* 73; Cyrill. Alex. *ad Nestor.* 1). For a multitude of the guesses about a matter perfectly simple, see Lampe, *Prolegom.* 24—30.

that they shared in some of the views which had once actuated their brother Apostle, the Zealot Simon.[1]

If the home of Zebedee was in or near Bethsaida, his two sons must have grown up in constant intercourse with Philip and Andrew and Peter, and with his cousins, the sons of Alphæus, and with Nathanael of the not-far-distant Cana. Whether he ever visited the home of the Virgin at Nazareth, and saw the sinless youth of Jesus, and the sternly legal faithfulness of "His brethren," we do not know, but in any case we can see that he enjoyed that best of training which consists in being brought up in the midst of sweet and noble natures, and in the free fresh life of a hardy calling and a beautiful land. And what most of all ennobled the aspirations of these young Galileans was that, with perfect trust in God, they were waiting for the consolation of Israel—they were cherishing the thought which lay at the very heart of all that was best and deepest in the old Covenant—the hope that the promised Messiah at length would come.

We are not told a single particular about his early years. We first see him—evidently in the prime of early manhood—as a disciple of the Baptist.[2] He does not mention himself by name, because in his Gospel he shows a characteristic reserve. But there never has been a doubt that he is the disciple who was with St. Andrew when they heard from their Master the words which were to influence their whole future life. The Baptist had received the deputation which the San-

[1] Luke vi. 15, Kananite=Zealot. The Zealots formed the "extreme left" division of the Pharisees politically, as the Essenes did religiously.

[2] Ecclesiastical tradition says that he was called "*adolescentior*," and even "*puer*." Paulin. Nol. *Ep.* 51. Ambros. *Offic.* ii. 20, § 101. Aug. *c. Faust.* xxx. 4. Jer. *c. Jovin*, i. 26.

hedrin had sent to enquire into his claims, and had told them that he was not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor "the Prophet." On the next day he saw Jesus coming towards him on His return from the temptation in the wilderness. Then first he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!" and testified that he had seen the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. Again, the next day, fixing his eyes on Jesus as He walked by, he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!" At once the two disciples followed Jesus. Turning and gazing on them as they followed, He said, "What are ye seeking?" Giving Him the highest title of reverence they knew, the simple Galileans answered, "Rabbi, where stayest thou?" He saith to them, "Come and see." They came and saw. It was now four in the evening, and they stayed with Him that night.

That brief intercourse sufficed to convince them that Jesus was the Christ. The next morning Andrew sought his brother Simon, and with the simple startling announcement, "We have found the Messiah," led him to the Lord.

It is not mentioned that St. John sought his brother, and it is clear that the elder son of Zebedee was not called to full discipleship till afterwards on the Sea of Galilee. It was from no difference in character that James did not, so far as we know, become a hearer of the Baptist. He was earning his daily bread as a fisherman, and may have found no opportunity to leave the Plain of Gennesareth. I have ventured elsewhere to conjecture the reason why St. John was able to seek the ministry of the Baptist though his brother was

not.[1] He had some connexion with Jerusalem, and even had a home there.[2] We find an explanation of this in the fact that the fish of the Lake of Galilee were largely supplied to Jerusalem, and nothing is more probable than that Zebedee, as a master fisherman, should have sent his younger son, at least occasionally, to the Holy City to superintend what must have been one of the most lucrative branches of his trade. If so, it would have been easy for St. John to reach in less than a day the banks of Jordan, and to listen to the mighty voice which was then rousing Priests and Pharisees as well as people from their sensual sleep.

The teaching of the Baptist appealed to the sternest instincts of his youthful follower. Its lofty morality, its uncompromising denunciations, its dauntless independence must have exercised a strong fascination over the young Galilean. It made him more than ever a Son of Thunder. It has been said of John the Baptist that he was like a burning torch—that the whole man was an Apocalypse. In the Apocalypse of him who was for a time his disciple, we still seem to hear echoes of that ringing voice, to catch hues of earthquake and eclipse from that tremendous imagery.

The question here arises whether St. John was or was not unmarried. The ancient Fathers are fond of speaking of him as a "virgin." As early as the pseudo-Ignatius we find an address to "Virgins," *i.e.*, celibates, with the prayer, "May I enjoy your holiness as that of Elijah, Joshua the son of Nun, Melchizedek, Elisha,

[1] See *Life of Christ*, i. 144.

[2] John xix. 27. "From that hour the Disciple took her to his own home" (εἰς τὰ ἴδια).

Jeremiah, John the Baptist, the Beloved Disciple, Timothy, Evodius, and Clemens." Nothing corresponding to this praise of "virginity" is found either in the Scripture or in the earliest Fathers, for "the virgins" of Rev. xiv. 14, and "those who have made themselves eunuchs for Christ's sake" of Matt. xix. 12, are expressions which, when taken in the sense which was familiar to the Jews themselves, convey no such exaltation of the unwedded life.[1] Tertullian, however, in his book "On Single Marriage," calls St. John "*Christi spado*," and St. Jerome, filled with his monastic *gnosis* on this subject, says that "when St. John wished to marry his Lord restrained him."[2] Similar testimony is repeated by St. Augustine, Epiphanius, and others, but it only seems to have been derived from the "Acts" of Leucius. Apart from direct evidence, all the customs of the Jews make it extremely improbable, and St. Paul tells us that "*the rest of the Apostles*" as well as Kephas were married.[3] The notion of his celibacy was strengthened by the erroneous misreading of a superscription to his first epistle which is itself erroneous. Augustine in one place quotes 1 John iii. 2, as occurring in St. John's letter "*to the Parthians*,"[4] and he is followed by Idacius Clarus, and (according to

[1] See the passages of Zohar quoted by Schöttgen, p. 159.

[2] Tert. *De Monogamia*, 17; Epiphan. *Haer.* lviii.; Jer. *c. Jovinian.* 1, 14, and in *proleg. Joann.*, *Praef. in Matt.*, *ad Is.* lvi. 4. Aug. *c. Faust.* xxx. 4. The virginity of St. John became a commonplace with the Ecclesiastical writers. See Chrysostom, *De Virg.* 82 (*Opp.* i. 332), Ps. Chrysostom (*Opp.* viii. 2, 246, *ed.* Montfaucon) where Peter is a type of σεμνογαμία, and John of παρθενία. Ambrose, *De Inst. Virg.* viii. 50. The belief originated in the *Acts* of Leucius. See Zahn, *Acta Joannis* c. ciii.

[3] 2 Cor. xi. 2, on which Ambrosiaster remarks "omnes Apostoli, *excepto Johanne et Paulo* uxores habuerunt."

[4] Est. *Praef. in* 1 *John.*

Bede) by Athanasius. But as there are also traces of its having been called "*a letter to Virgins*," it has been supposed that *Parthos* is a mistaken contraction for *parthenous*, or *vice versâ*. But even if St. John had thus written a letter to "virgins," it would not be a necessary inference that he was himself unmarried, or even that "virgins" and celibates were equivalent terms.[1]

The first call of St. John on the banks of Jordan was not the final call. St. John accompanied Jesus to the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee, and saw Him manifest forth His glory. Then, during the early ministry of Jesus in Southern Judæa, the little band of brethren seem to have resumed for a time their ordinary avocations.

It was on the Lake of Galilee, after the miraculous draught of fishes, that there came to him the decisive call—"Follow Me." He obeyed the call. With his brother he left his father Zebedee and the boat, and the hired servants—left all, and followed Jesus. Of Zebedee we hear no more. It is probable that he died soon afterwards; for in the bright year of the Galilean ministry, before Jesus was driven to fly northward, and to wander through semi-heathen districts, we find Salome, the mother of James and John, among "the women who ministered unto Him of their substance."

The Apostles whom the Lord gathered finally around Him before the Sermon on the Mount fall into three groups of four, of which the first and most privileged consisted of Andrew, Peter, James, and

[1] Another cause of this belief was the fancy that our Lord specially approved of St. John's celibacy, and that this also was the reason why the Virgin was entrusted to his care. Zahn, *Acta Joannis*, p. 201, *seqq.*

John; of these again the last three were the most chosen of the chosen.[1] Alone of the Apostles they were permitted to witness the Raising of Jairus's daughter, the Transfiguration, and the Agony in the Garden. And of these three again the nearest and dearest was John. Of both Peter and John it might have been said that they, more than all the rest, were disciples whom Jesus loved as personal companions[2]; but St. John alone—not with a claim of vainglory, but with the simple testimony of truth—has indicated to us unmistakably, yet with dignified reserve, that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved and honoured with the affection of high esteem.[3] St. Peter was the more prominent as the champion of the Christ; St. John was the closer friend of Jesus.[4] And we see in his Gospel the *proof* that he was so. The Synoptists witness faithfully to external events. St. John gives a far more inward picture. He writes as one to whom it had been granted to know something of his Master's inmost thoughts.[5]

And yet this high honour, this distinguishing personal affection, arose from no faultless ideality in his character. The youth with whom Italian art has made us familiar—the youth of unearthly beauty, with features

[1] Ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτοτέρους (Clem. Alex.).

[2] In John xx. 2 we have the expression ἔρχεται πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον μαθήτην ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς. From the change of term (ἐφίλει, not as in other places ἠγάπα), and from the structure of the sentence, Canon Westcott (*ad loc.*) infers, with much probability, that Peter is here included in the description.

[3] ἠγάπα, xiii. 23; xix. 26; xxi. 7, 20.

[4] St. Peter has been called Φιλόχριστος, St. John Φιλοιήσους.

[5] See John vi. 6, 61, 64: ᾔδει γαρ ἐξ ἀρχῆς κ.τ.λ. ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν, xi. 33; xiii. 1, 3, 11, 21. ἐταράχθη τῷ πνεύματι, xviii. 4; xix. 28, &c.

of almost feminine softness, with the long bright locks streaming down his neck, and the eagle by his side, is not the St. John of the New Testament: he is neither the St. John of the Synoptists and the Apocalypse, nor of the Fourth Gospel and Epistles—but is the one-sided idealisation of Christian painters.[1] Jesus loved him because of his warm affections, his devoted faithfulness, his glowing zeal, his passionate enthusiasm; not because his character as yet approached perfection. The young St. John had very much both to learn and to unlearn. He participated in the faults of fretfulness, impatience, emulous selfishness, ambitious literalism, want of consideration, want of tenderness, dulness of understanding, and hardness of heart, which, as the Gospels so faithfully tell us, were common to all the disciples.[2] Nay more, it is remarkable that, in nearly every instance in which he is brought into prominence, either singly or with his brother, it is in connexion with some error of perception or fault of conduct. He had to *unlearn* the exaggeration of the very tendencies which gave to his character so much of its human charm. He had to learn lessons of tolerance, lessons of mercy, lessons of humility, which perhaps it took him his whole life to understand in all their fulness as falling under the one law of Christian love.

1. Thus on one occasion a selfish dispute had arisen among the Apostles as to which of them should be the greatest.[3] Our Lord rebuked it by taking a little child

[1] Pictures of St. John existed in early days among the Carpocratians. See the fragments of Leucius in Zahn, p. 223.

[2] Matt. xv. 16; xvi. 6—12; John xii. 16; Mark ix. 33; Luke ix. 49; xxii. 24; xxiv. 25, &c.

[3] Luke ix. 49; Mark ix. 38.

and saying, by way of consolation as well as by way of reproof, "Whosoever shall receive this little child in My name, receiveth Me."[1] The conscience of St. John seems to have smitten him as he listened to the tender and moving lesson, and with an ingenuous impulse he confessed to having taken part in conduct which now struck him as a fault. "Master," he said, "we saw one in Thy name trying to cast out the demons, and we prevented him, because he does not follow with us." To prevent him had been a natural impulse of sectarian pride and ecclesiastical jealousy. The man was not an Apostle, not even a professed disciple; what right had he thus, as it were, to steal the credit of miracles which belonged to the Lord only, and which He had delegated to none but His genuine followers? "Who," St. John may have thought, "is this unknown exorcist, who thus encroaches on *our* privileges?" and so, with other Apostles, he had disowned the man, and peremptorily forbidden him.[2] It was an impulse somewhat similar to that which had made Joshua exclaim, "O my lord Moses forbid them," when he heard that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp. Instantly and nobly the great law-giver had answered, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them."[3] So now came at once the answer, the spirit of which in two thousand years Christians have hardly begun to

[1] An old tradition, mentioned by Hilary, seems strangely to have said that St. John was the boy to whom Jesus pointed in order to rebuke the ambition of the disciples. See Zahn, *Acta Joannis*, p. cxxxiv.

[2] Luke ix. 49 ἐκωλύσαμεν.

[3] Num. xi. 38

learn, "Prevent him not! for he who is not against us, is on our side."

2. But, once again, John and his brother James had needed a stern and public lesson. They had been taught that sectarian jealousy is alien from the heart of Christ; they had now to learn that religious intolerance and cruel severity are violations of His spirit. They had to learn, or *begin* to learn, the lesson—of which (once more) nineteen centuries have failed to convince the self-styled representatives of Churches—that violence is hateful to God.[1]

The incident occurred at the beginning of the Lord's great public journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, when He now openly assumed the dignity of the Messiah, and was accompanied not only by His disciples, but by a multitude of followers, all—like Himself—pilgrims on their way to the Holy City. The first village which lies between the borders of Galilee and Samaria, at the foot of the Hills of Ephraim, is the pleasant village of En Gannîm, or the "Fountain of Gardens," then, as now, inhabited by a rude and fanatical community. The numbers of His retinue, and the fact that He was now about to enter on the territory of Samaria, made it necessary to send messengers before Him to provide for His reception. It was not always that the Galileans ventured to take the road through Samaria, for the intense exacerbation between Jews and Samaritans constantly showed itself by collisions between Samaritans and Passover pilgrims. Still this road was taken sometimes by the festival caravans, and it may be that our Lord was willing to test whether the memory of His previous stay among the Samari-

[1] Βία ἐχθρὸν Θεῷ.

tans would secure for Himself and His followers a friendly welcome. But one of the numberless quarrels which were constantly arising had made the Samaritans more than usually hostile. Violating the rule of hospitality, though it is the very first rule of Eastern life, the villagers of En Gannîm refused to receive the Messianic band.

It was a flagrant wrong thus to dismiss a weary and hungry multitude at the foot of the frontier hills, at a distance from other villages, and at the beginning of their sacred pilgrimage. But besides this it was an undisguised insult, a refusal, open as that of the Gadarenes, to admit the now public claims of Him who asked their courtesy. Instantly the hot spirit of the sons of Zebedee took fire. It was in this very country that Elijah, to avenge a much smaller wrong, had called down fire from Heaven.[1] Had not the time arrived for One greater than Elijah to vindicate His majesty, and to revive by some signal miracle the drooping spirits of His followers? "And on seeing it His disciples James and John said, Lord, willest Thou we should bid fire to descend from heaven, and consume them, as even Elijah did?" What wonder, it has been said, "that the Sons of Thunder should wish to flash lightning?" But how significant are the touches of character even in those few words, "Willest Thou that *we*—"! They want to take part in the miracle themselves. *They*, too, have been insulted in the person of their Lord. They have an uneasy sense that calling down fire from heaven does not quite accord with the character of Him who "went about doing good," but they are ready to undertake the

[1] 2 Kings i. 9—14.

task for him. Yet, even in expressing the wish, they feel a little touch of shame. Is not such conduct vindictive and impatient? Well, at least, their excuse is ready—"*as Elijah did.*" They can shelter themselves behind a great name. For their earthly wrath they can adduce a Scripture precedent. They have "a text" ready to consecrate their personal resentment. Alas! had it been in their power to make the heavens blaze they would but have furnished another instance of the crimes which have been committed or excused in the name of Scripture. What is it that we learn from remorseless persecutions, bitter hatreds between those who bear the common name of Christian—from the atrocities of the Inquisition, from savage Crusades, from brutal witch-murders, from the fires of Smithfield and of Toledo, from the condonation and even the approval of mere assassins, from medals struck in honour of massacres of St. Bartholomew, from sermons preached amid the agonies of martyrs, from the slanders and calumnies weekly used to write down imaginary opponents by those who think that in the hideous forms of their fanaticism they are doing God service?—what do we learn from these most miserable and blood-stained pages of ecclesiastical controversy, but that

> "In religion
> What damnëd error but some sober brow
> Will bless it and approve it with a text,
> Hiding the grossness with fair ornament"

But the lesson of all Scripture is that, though the Elijah-times may require the Elijah-spirit, yet the Elijah-times have passed for ever, and that the Elijah-spirit is not the Christ-spirit. For Christians, at any

rate, it is written, bright and large, over every page of the New Testament, that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."[1] And how full of instruction is Christ's reproof! He does not stop or stoop to argue. He does not unfold the hidden springs of selfishness and passion which had caused their fierce request. He does not dispute their Scripture precedent. He does not point out that texts *must* be misused if they be applied to exacerbate human hatreds born in the inflation of religious vanity. He does not reproach them for the indifference to the agony of others which lay in the words "Willest Thou we should bid fire to descend from Heaven and *consume them?*" No; but, turning round, He rebuked them, and said, "Ye know not—ye—of what spirit ye are.[2] For the Son of Man came not to destroy men's souls, but to save." His words were brief and compassionate, because in their error, flagrant as it was, there was still a root of nobleness. Their zeal for the Lord, their love of His person, their impassioned estimate of the heinousness of any insult directed against Him—these were the salt of good motives which saved their conduct from being entirely evil. Where they erred was in the fancy that love to Him can be rightly shown by fury and vengeance against those whom

[1] The needfulness of the lesson becomes even more clear when we find St. Ambrose (*in* Luke ix. 54, 55) deliberately defending the Apostles: "Nec discipuli peccant, qui legem sequuntur," &c. How greatly do we all need to offer the prayer—

"Let not this weak unknowing hand
Presume Thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On each I judge my foe."

[2] Luke ix. 55. οἵου πνεύματός ἐστε ὑμεῖς. Both the expression of the word ὑμεῖς and its position make it extremely emphatic.

they deemed to be His enemies; and that it was His will that any should perish rather than come to repentance. It was a lesson, for all ages, of infinite tenderness and infinite tolerance; a lesson which during these long centuries theologians and religious parties and partisans have for the most part failed to learn. Of old, when it was permitted them, they resorted to chains and stakes; now that the secular weapons have been struck out of their grasp, they shoot out their arrows, even bitter words. And they take this to be religion,—this to be the sort of service which Christ approves!

3. Once again in the Gospels the sons of Zebedee come into separate prominence, and once again they appear as disciples who have misunderstood Christ's promises, and but imperfectly learnt His lessons. The incident occurred at one of the most solemn moments in His life. From the plots and excommunications of His enemies, with a heavy price upon His head, He had taken refuge in deep obscurity in the little town of Ephraim. There He remained for some weeks between the death of Lazarus and the Passover,[1] until from the summit of the conical hill on which the little town was built, He could see the long trains of Galilean pilgrims streaming down the Jordan valley on their way to Jerusalem. Then He knew that He could join them and proceed at their head to the Holy City. He set forth to what He foresaw would be His death of agony and shame. As seems to have been common with Him, He walked alone, and in front, while the Apostles followed in a group at some little distance

[1] John xi. 54.

behind Him. But on this occasion the majesty of His purpose seems so to have clothed His person with awe and grandeur—He seemed to be so transfigured by the halo of Divine sorrow, that—as we learn from St. Mark—in one of those unexplained references which he doubtless borrowed from the reminiscences of St. Peter—the disciples as they walked behind Him were amazed and full of fear.[1] From His look and manner they felt instinctively that something more than usually awful was at hand. Nor did He leave them long in doubt as to what it was. He beckoned them to Him, and in language more definite and unmistakable than ever before, He revealed to them not only that He should be betrayed, and mocked, and scourged, and spit upon, but even the crowning horror that He should be *crucified*—and then that, on the third day, He should rise again.

It was at that most inopportune moment that Salome came to Him with her two sons, James and John, worshipping Him, begging Him to grant them something. The facile mother was but the mouthpiece for the ill-instructed ambition of her sons. Relying on her near earthly relationship to Him, on her services in His cause, on His known regard for them both, on His special affection for one of them, they wanted thus to forestall the rest, and to secure a special and personal blessing for themselves. They wanted thus, and finally, to settle the dispute, which had so often arisen among the half-trained Apostles, as to which of them should have the precedence, which should be the greatest among them. Yet

[1] Mark x. 32.

we must not think that their motive was altogether earthly in its character. It was not *all* selfishness; it was not *mere* ambition—at any rate, not vulgar selfishness, not ignoble ambition. In the strange complexity of human motives there was doubtless a large admixture of these impurer elements, and there was also a complete ignorance as to the nature of the approaching end. But there was also a loving desire to be nearest to Jesus, one at His right hand, one at His left. They had thought of material power and splendour in their interpretation of His promises. *His* thoughts had been of the cross, theirs were of the throne. In their ignorance they had asked for the places which, seven days afterwards, were occupied in infamy and anguish by two crucified robbers. Oh, fond, foolish mother! oh, too presumptuous sons! the kingdom of Heaven is not as ye think. It is not a place for ambitious precedence and selfish rivalries. Not there do Michael and Gabriel contrast the respective value of their services, or compete as to which shall do "the maximum of service on the minimum of grace." There the success of each is the joy of all, and the glory of each the pride of all. Nor is there, as ye vainly imagine, any favouritism, any private partiality, any acceptance of men's persons with God and with His Christ. All are alike the children of His impartial mercy—"all equally guilty, all equally redeemed." With Him many of the first shall be last, and many of the last first, and many whom their brethren would altogether exclude shall be heirs of His common heaven, and many who, on earth, figured as saints, and great divines, shall be far below the peasants and little ones of His kingdom—and, alas! here on

earth, how many, glorying in themselves, have delighted in anathemas and misrepresentations—

> "Who there below shall grovel in the mire,
> Leaving behind them horrible dispraise!"

But once more, because the request was not *all* selfish or *all* ignoble, and because in true hearts deeper lessons spring from loving forbearance than from loud rebuke, Jesus gently said to them, "Ye know not"—again, "*Ye know not*," for it was ignorance, not badness, from which their errors sprang—"Ye know not what ye are asking for yourselves. Can ye drink the cup which I am about to drink, and be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am being baptised?"[1] They say to Him, "We can." And He saith to them, "My cup indeed ye shall drink, and with the baptism wherewith I am being baptised shall ye be baptised; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is Mine to give to those only for whom it has been prepared by My Father."[2] In that bold answer, "*We can!*" had flashed out all the true nobleness of the sons of Zebedee. For the answer of Jesus had by that time partially undeceived them. It had shown them the mistaken nature of their chiliastic hopes. They saw that the blessing for which they had asked had been, so far as things earthly were concerned, a primacy of sorrow; that the only passage to Christ's throne of glory lay through the endurance of suffering; that to be near Him was—as the oldest Christian tradition quoted some of His unrecorded words—to be "near the sword and near the fire:"[3]—and yet they had not

[1] The Fathers speak of the triple baptism in water, by the Spirit, and in blood. [2] Matt. xx. 23.

[3] ὁ ἐγγύς μου ἐγγὺς τοῦ πυρός (Didymus *in* Ps. lxxxviii. 8).

shrunk. Whatever the price was, they were ready to pay it. To be near Him was worth it all.

And the punishment of their fault came in part and at once in the indignant disapproval of their fellow Apostles. The other disciples, too, had *their* chiliastic hopes; they wanted *their* thrones and their prerogatives; and all that had been selfish and unworthy in this attempt of the Sons of Thunder to wring, as it were, from private influence or private kinsmanship an exclusive privilege, aroused a strong counter selfishness. Doubtless the voice of Judas was loudest in the complaint that this was a mean attempt to steal from others their fair share of a private advantage; that it was "just what might have been expected of Salome and her sons."[1] But instantly the Lord healed the rising feud. He called them all round Him. He taught them that arrogant lordship and domineering despotism[2] were the characteristics of Gentile self-assertion. "Not so shall it be among you. But whosoever wills to become great among you shall be your servant; and whosoever wills to become first of you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Yet the fault and the rebuke of which St. John had had his share in no ways alienated from him the affection of his Lord. We see him again at the last supper, and he is leaning on Christ's breast. It is from this that he gains his title in the early Church of "the bosom disciple."[3] Although he does not men-

[1] Matt. xx. 24, *οἱ δέκα ἠγανάκτησαν περὶ τῶν δύο ἀδελφῶν.*
[2] Mark x. 42, *κατακυριεύουσιν . . κατεξουσιάζουσιν.*
[3] *ὁ ἐπιστήθιος.*

tion his own name, he is himself the describer of the incident. Jesus and the Twelve are reclining at the quasi-paschal meal. Our Lord is in the centre of the couch leaning on His left arm. At His right, in the place of honour, was perhaps Peter, or perhaps—as an office-bearer of the little band—the traitor Judas. At his left, and therefore with his head near the breast of Jesus, is reclining "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The anguish of the soul of Jesus wrung from Him the groan, "Verily, verily, I say to you that one of you shall betray Me." The words fell very terribly on the ears of the Apostles. They began to gaze on one another with astonishment, with perplexity, almost with mutual suspicion.[1] They thought that if any one knew, John knew the secret; and supposing that Jesus had whispered into his ear the fatal name which He would not speak aloud, St. Peter, catching his eye by a sign, whispered to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He speaks?"[2] John did not indeed know the traitor's name, but leaning back his head with a sudden motion, so as to look up in the face of Jesus,[3] he said, "Lord, who is it?" Then Jesus whispered, "It is that one for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him." He dipped the piece of bread in the common dish, and gave it to Judas. Then Satan entered into him, and he went forth into the night. Relieved of the oppression of that painful presence, Jesus began those Divine discourses which it was granted to John

[1] John xiii. 22, *ἀπορούμενοι περὶ τίνος λέγει.*

[2] B, C, L.

[3] John xiii. 25, *ἐπιπεσών*, not "leaning" (*ἀνακείμενος*), as in the E. V., but *suddenly changing his posture.* The *οὕτως*, which is read in B, C, E, F, etc., is a vivid touch of reminiscence, describing the actual posture as in iv. 6.

alone to preserve—so "rarely mixed of sorrows and joys, and studded with mysteries as with emeralds."

We see John once again, with Peter and James, in the Garden of Gethsemane sleeping the sleep of sorrow and weariness, when it had been better had he kept awake; and then we see him showing no greater courage than the rest when "all the disciples forsook Him and fled."

> "'What should wring this from thee?'—ye laugh and ask;
> What wrung it? Even a torchlight and a noise,
> The sudden Roman faces, violent hands,
> And fears of what the Jews might do! Just that,
> And it is written 'I forsook and fled.'
> There was my trial, and it ended thus."[1]

But if he was one of those who fled, he was the earliest of all to rejoin his Lord. Braving the multitude, and the peril, and the shame, he at once returned from his flight, and followed the group who, under the traitor's guidance, were leading Jesus bound to the joint palace of Hanan and Caiaphas. He even ventured to enter the palace with those who were guarding the Prisoner.[2] He gained admission because he was known to the High Priest. It is unlikely that this has anything to do with the fact that he had some distant affinity with priestly families,[3] or with the strange and probably symbolical tradition that, in his old age at Ephesus, he wore the *petalon* or golden plate which marked the mitre of High Priesthood.[4] Nor is it easy to imagine how a Galilean fisherman should

[1] Browning, *A Death in the Desert.*

[2] John xviii. 15, "went in with Jesus."

[3] The Virgin Mary was a kinswoman of Elizabeth, who was the wife of a leading priest; and, therefore, the sons of Zebedee, through their mother, must have had some priestly connexions.

[4] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24, quoting Polycrates.

have known anything personally of these wealthy Sadducean aristocrats, with whom he had not a single thought or a single sympathy in common. To me it seems probable that he knew Hanan and his household only in the way of his business, and I see in this incidental notice a fresh confirmation of my conjecture that the duties of this business obliged him sometimes to reside at Jerusalem.

And thus the beloved disciple stayed with Christ during the long hours of that night of shame and agony. He was doubtless an eye-witness of all that he narrates respecting Peter's denial, and the scenes which took place before Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate. He saw Jesus—with the murderer by His side—standing on the pavement, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, dyed a deeper purple with His blood. He heard the Jews prefer to Him Barabbas as their favourite, and Tiberius as their king. He heard the bursts of involuntary pity and involuntary admiration which wrung from the half-Christianised conscience of the cruel governor the exclamations, "Behold the man!" "Behold your king!" He saw Him bear His cross to Golgotha; and saw Him crucified; and saw the two brigands occupying the places for which he and James had asked so ignorantly, at His right hand and at His left.

Four women stood beside those crosses. They were the mother of Jesus; Salome, His mother's sister; Mary, the wife of Clopas, perhaps another sister; and Mary of Magdala. With them, alone apparently of all the Apostles, stood St. John. No other disciple, except standing in a group afar off, was present during those awfully agonising, those supremely crushing

moments which seemed to dash into indistinguishable ruin all their hopes, and to give an almost fiendish significance to the taunts of priests and mob. Let us recognise the heroism, the faith, the endurance which enabled the three Maries, and Salome, and her son, to stand gazing at a scene which must have made the sword pierce their souls with unutterable agony. Let us see in it the proof that if Salome and John had indeed looked to share with Him a pre-eminence of blessedness, they were not ashamed to stand beside Him in the hour of His humiliation, and in the Valley of the Shadow of His Death.

And even in His hour of agony, His kingly eye was on them. To them were addressed the second, perhaps the first words which He uttered after the actual elevation of His cross.[1] "Seeing then His mother and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He said to His mother 'Woman, behold thy son!' Then He saith to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother!'" Very few words, but there was compressed into them a whole world of meaning and of tenderness! And what can appear less strange than that to St. John was entrusted that precious charge? True that Christ had "brethren;" but apparently they were not there; or, if they were there, it was only among "the many" who stood "beholding from afar"—the many whose love was not at that moment strong enough to overcome the

[1] The prayer for His murderers seems to have been breathed when the hands were pierced, and before the cross was uplifted (Luke xxiii. 34) The omission by B, D, etc., may be due to some lectionary arrangement, but is surely insufficient to throw doubt on its genuineness, since it is found in ℵ, A, C, F, G, etc. We cannot tell whether the promise to the converted robber was spoken before or after these words to His mother and St. John.

horror and the fear. But John was there—almost His earliest disciple; whom He loved most; who believed on Him unreservedly; who was akin to Him; whose mother was the Virgin's sister; who was rich enough to undertake the charge; whose natural character, at once so brave and so loving, fitted him for it; who had powerful friends; who was probably the only Apostle and the only relative of Jesus who had a home at Jerusalem, where, in the bosom of the infant Church which Christ had founded, it was fitting that the Virgin should henceforth dwell. "And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home."[1]

"*From that hour;*"—he felt probably that the Virgin had witnessed as much as human nature could sustain of that awful scene. There would be no rescue; no miracle. Jesus would die—would die, as He had said, upon the cross. The Virgin had suffered enough of agony; she had received her last farewell; it needed not that she should witness the deepening anguish, the glazing eye, the horrible *crurifragium* which probably awaited Him. The Beloved Disciple took her to his own home.

But he must himself have returned to the cross, for he tells us expressly and emphatically that he was a personal eye-witness of the last scenes. He was standing by when the soldiers broke the legs of the two robbers to hasten their deaths, which otherwise might not have happened till after two more days of lingering agony.

[1] The tradition to which the Fathers refer as "*ecclesiastica historia*" (probably derived from the *Acts* of Leucius) assign another reason. "Cujus privilegii sit Joannes, immo *Joannis Virginitas;* a domino virgine mater virgo virgini discipulo commendatur" (Jer. *c. Jovin.* i. 26). δῆλον ὅτι Ἰωάννῃ διὰ τὴν παρθενίαν (Epiph. *Haer.* lxxviii. 10; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 51, &c.). See Zahn, p. 206.

He was close by the cross when, seeing that Jesus was already dead, a soldier gashed His side "with the broad head of his lance," and "immediately there came out blood and water"[1]—to be for all the world the mystic signs of imparted life and cleansing power. "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true, and he knoweth that he saith things that are true that ye also may believe." That witness was to be henceforth the work of his life;—the winning over of men to that belief was to be henceforth the main end of all he did and all he wrote.[2] And to that incident, narrated by him alone of the Evangelists, he refers with special emphasis in the Epistle which enshrines his final legacy to the Church of God.

How long the Apostle stood to the Virgin in the place of a son we do not know. She is mentioned in the New Testament but once again, when we see her united in prayer and supplication with the other holy women and the Apostles, and with the "brethren of the Lord," now at last fully converted by the miracle of the Resurrection. After that slight notice she disappears not only from Scripture history, but from early tradition. It was unknown, even as far back as the second century, whether she died in Jerusalem, where the tomb of the Virgin is now shown, close to Gethsemane;[3] or whether, after more than eleven years had elapsed, she accompanied St. John to Ephesus, and died and was buried there.[4]

[1] John xix. 34, λόγχῃ . . . ἔνυξεν. [2] xix. 35; xx. 30.

[3] This supposed tomb was unknown for at least six centuries. Nicephorus, in the fourteenth century—from whom has been derived such a mass of entirely untrustworthy tradition—says that she died at Jerusalem, aged fifty-nine (*H. E.* ii. 3).

[4] Epiphan. *Haer.* lxxviii. 11. This was asserted in a synodical letter

The subsequent glimpses which we obtain of St. John in Scripture are not numerous. He does not once appear alone, but always in conjunction with St. Peter, and for twenty years and more he does not seem to have manifested any independent or original action. On the morning of the Resurrection he was with St. Peter, when they two were the first who received from Mary of Magdala the startling tidings that the tomb was open and empty. Instantly they ran to visit it. The swift step of St. John, who was the younger of the two, outran Peter; and as he stood stooping and peering into the darkness he saw that Jesus was not there, and caught only the white gleam of the linen clothes. But when Peter came to the place no awe, no danger of Levitical pollution, could restrain his impetuous eagerness. He would see all, know all. Instantly he plunged into the dim interior, and stood gazing on the scene which presented itself.[1] The shroud which had swathed the body lay there; the napkin lay rolled up in a place by itself. As they went home together, the Divine *necessity* that Jesus should rise from the dead dawned first with full conviction upon their minds.

Once more we see St. John separately and as a distinct figure in his own Gospel. He was with the Eleven on that first Easter evening when Jesus appeared to them in the closed upper room, and said, "Peace be with you," and showed them His hands and His feet, and breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." He was with the Twelve when Jesus again

of the Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431. It seems, however, to be very unlikely, for had she died at Ephesus *her* grave would have been even more likely to be pointed out than the grave of John.

[1] John xx. 6, εἰσῆλθεν . . . θεωρεῖ.

appeared to them on the next Sunday, and Thomas was convinced. Then for a little time the Appearances of the Risen Lord seem to have been intermitted. Driven to earn his daily bread, Peter proposed to resume the fishing, which had for so long a time been abandoned. Thomas and Nathaniel, James and John, and two other disciples, accompanied them. They toiled all night; but they caught nothing. But when day began to dawn,[1] Jesus stood suddenly upon the beach. They, however, did not recognise Him in His glorified body,[2] and in that unexpected place, as He stood with His figure looming dimly through the morning mist. He said to them, "Children, have ye anything to eat?" They answered, "No." Then He bade them cast the net on the right side of the ship, and immediately they were not able to drag the net into the boat for the multitude of fishes. The meaning of the sign flashed at once upon the soul of the disciple whom Jesus loved. He said to Peter, "*It is the Lord!*" Instantly Peter had snatched up his fisher's coat, and plunged into the sea to swim to land. More slowly the rest followed in the little boat,[3] dragging to land the net full of one hundred and fifty-three fishes, which they were unable to haul into their ship. When they got to land they saw there a charcoal fire with a fish broiling on it, and a loaf beside it, as one may often see now when the poor Fellahîn are fishing in the Sea of Galilee. Jesus bade them bring some of their fish, and share in the morning meal. They dared not ask Him, "Who art Thou?" knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus brought them the bread and the loaf, and they

[1] John xxi. 4, *γινομένης*. [2] John xx. 14; Luke xxiv. 31.
[3] xxi. 8, *πλοιαρίῳ*.

broke their fast. Then, after the meal, there took place that deeply touching interview in which Jesus bade the now-forgiven and deeply-repentant Peter to feed His little lambs, and to feed and tend His sheep,[1] and prophesied to him the martyr-death that he should die. Peter, as he turned away, caught sight of John, who was following them, and with sudden curiosity asked, "Lord, but this man—what?"[2] "If I will him to abide while I am coming,[3] what is it to thee? Follow *thou* Me." The expression was misunderstood, as those of the Lord so often were. It led to the mistaken notion among the brethren that that disciple was not to die. It is to remove that erroneous impression that he relates the incident. It is clear from his language that he did not even then, in extreme old age, understand its complete significance, because Christ had never revealed the secrets about the time and manner of His coming. But his correct version of the misquoted words did not prevent the continuance of the error. Even when he was dead, legend continued to assert that he was living in the grave, and that his breath gently heaved the dust.[4]

[1] xxi. 15, *βόσκε τὰ ἀρνία μου*; 16, *ποίμαινε*; 17, *βόσκε τὰ πρόβατά μου*.

[2] xxi. 21. *Κύριε, οὗτος δὲ τί*; Vulg. *Domine, hic autem quid?*

[3] See Canon Westcott's note on this expression (*Speaker's Comm. ad loc.*).

[4] St. Augustine (*in Joh.* cxxiv. 2) seems to have been half inclined to accept this strange and unmeaning legend on the testimony of grave people who imagined themselves to have witnessed it!

CHAPTER XXV.

LIFE OF ST. JOHN AFTER THE ASCENSION.

"Æterna sapientia sese in omnibus rebus maxime in humanâ mente, omnium maxime in Christo Jesu manifestavit."—SPINOZA, *Ep.* xxi.

AFTER this St. John is mentioned but thrice, and alluded to but once in the New Testament.

i. He is enumerated among the eleven Apostles who were gathered in the Upper Room with the rest of the little company of believers after the Ascension, and who were constantly engaged in prayer and supplication.[1]

ii. He was going up with Peter to worship in the Temple at three o'clock in the afternoon—one of the stated hours of prayer—when Peter healed the lame man, and afterwards addressed the assembled worshippers, whose amazement had been kindled by that act of power. This great address—in which, as we infer from Acts iv. 1, St. John took some part—was interrupted by the sudden arrest of the Apostles. They were seized in the sacred precincts by the dominant Sadducees—the priests and the captain of the Temple. As it was now evening the two Apostles were thrown into prison. Next morning they were haled before the Sanhedrin which gathered for their trial in the imposing numbers of all its three constituent committees. The accused, according to the usual custom, were set

[1] Acts i. 13.

in the midst of the semicircle and sternly interrogated. The two Apostles—Peter again being the chief spokesman—gave a bold and noble testimony, from which the Sanhedrists recognised the two facts that "they had been with Jesus," and that they were simple and unlettered persons. The Pharisees from the whole height of their ignorance looked down on them as "no theologians." Their Galilean dialect, and their obvious unacquaintance with Rabbinic learning, inclined the Sanhedrin to despise them. On the other hand, they were perplexed by the presence and witness of the lame man who had undeniably been healed. They therefore remanded the Apostles while they held a discussion among themselves. In spite of the severity for which the Sadducees were notorious, they did not feel justified on this occasion in doing anything more than threatening them with worse consequences if they ventured to preach again in the name of Jesus. The Apostles gave them frank warning that such threats must be in vain, since it was a plain duty to obey God rather than man. Afraid, however, of exciting a tumult among the people who, up to this time, sided heartily with the Christians, and were glorifying God for the recent miracle, the Sanhedrin were forced to content themselves with renewing their threats, and they set the Apostles free.

The return of Peter and John to the assembled brethren was followed by a song of triumphant gladness, and by another outpouring of spiritual influences. During these earlier scenes of Christian history there is no doubt that St. John lived mainly at Jerusalem—though he may have made short excursions to places in Palestine. He must have lived through the short

period during which the Church adopted the experiment of community of goods; must have heard of, or witnessed, the terrible fate of Ananias and Sapphira; and must have shared in the outburst of supernatural power, followed by multitudes of conversions, which marked the early energy of St. Peter. He was arrested with the other Apostles in a fresh alarm of the priestly party, and thrust into the public prison. Having been delivered in the night by an angel, at the dawn of the next day they were once more led before the startled Sanhedrin. This time they were arrested without violence, for the priests feared a violent intervention of the people on their behalf. Stung, however, to madness by the firm attitude of the Apostles, who, to the remonstrances of the High Priest, answered by their spokesman St. Peter that they were bound to refuse obedience to the murderers of their Lord, the Sanhedrin seriously debated whether they should put them all to death, and were only saved by the wise counsel of Gamaliel from the commission of that fatal crime. They determined, however, to scourge the Apostles; and then first St. John knew what it was to suffer disgrace and bodily anguish for his Lord. But that anguish failed of its intended purpose. The Apostles rejoiced that they were deemed worthy to suffer shame for His name, and daily in the Temple preached the good news of Jesus Christ.

iii. Then followed the appointment of the Seven; the preaching and martyrdom of St. Stephen; the scattering of all the Church except the Apostles, in consequence of the fierce persecution of Saul the Pharisee; the work of Philip in Samaria; the journey of St. Peter and St. John to confirm the new converts, and the stern en-

counter with Simon Magus.[1] After this the two friends travelled through Samaria, preaching in many of the villages. Perhaps En Gannîm was one of those villages, and by that time St. John had learnt the meaning of the rebuke "Ye know not—ye—of what spirit ye are." He saw then why Jesus had rebuked the evil wish to call down fire from heaven and consume them all. Then, too, he learnt what Jesus meant when He had said to them by the well of Jacob, "Lift up your eyes and gaze on the fields, because they are white unto harvest already. . . I sent you to reap that wherein ye have not toiled. Others have toiled, and ye have entered into their toil."[2]

iv. After this the name of St. John disappears entirely from the Acts of the Apostles. We cannot tell what view he took at first of the bold conduct of Peter in admitting to baptism a Gentile soldier and his household—in "going in to men uncircumcised and eating with them." We can only feel sure that Peter's conviction would—in the close union which had ever subsisted between them—have gone far to help his own. By the time when he wrote the Apocalypse he had learned to look upon the Gentiles as true and equal members of the Church of God.[3]

It was four or five years after the conversion of Cornelius[4] that Herod Agrippa I. seized James, the elder brother of John, and put him to death with the sword. We are told so little of St. James, the son of

[1] Acts viii. 14.

[2] John iv. 35—38.

[3] On the much disputed question whether in the Apocalypse the Gentiles are placed on a footing of absolute equality with the Jews, see Gebhardt, *Doctrine of the Apocalypse*, pp. 180—194.

[4] A.D. 44.

Zebedee, that we do not know by what bold deed or burning word he had provoked his doom. We may judge with what mingled feelings of anguish and exultation St. John would witness or hear of the murder of the elder brother with whom he had spent his life. St. James was the first martyr of the Apostles. How vast were to be the changes in the Church and in the world during the long half century before John passed away to join his brother—the last survivor of that high and glorious band! But, doubtless, he was in some measure prepared for this lengthening of his life. In that memorable scene on the misty lake at early morning Jesus had spoken to Peter of martyrdom; to John He had spoken only of tarrying while He was coming. It is as though He had said, "Let finished action follow Me, shaped by the example of My passion; but let contemplation, now commenced, abide until I come, to be perfected when I have come."[1] "The one Apostle," says Canon Westcott, "is the minister of action, whose service is consummated by the martyrdom of death; the other is the minister of thought and teaching, whose service is perfected in the martyrdom of life."

v. The name of St. John occurs but once in the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul. Perhaps in the early years of St. Paul's stormy ministry the two would not have been naturally drawn together. They would be separated in part by the memories of "the great persecution,"[2] of which Saul had been the most furious agent, and in which John may have lost many friends. They would be still more separated by deeply-seated differences of character. St. John, as we have said, was

[1] Aug. *in Joh.* cxxiv. 3.

[2] Acts viii. 1, *μέγας διωγμός*.

wholly unlike the effeminate pietist of Titian's or of Raphael's pictures. We have seen that there was within him a spring of most fiery vehemence. Yet, so far as we can judge, this passion was not often or easily aroused. None could have written as St. John wrote who had not thought long and deeply; and the slight part which he is recorded to have taken in the history of the Church during the first twenty-five years of its existence shows that he was either absorbed in the care of the Virgin, or that he was living a life of meditation and devotion. This was almost necessitated by the atmosphere of persecution which was continuously breathed by the Church of Jerusalem. But St. John must have been naturally inclined to a quiet and contemplative life. Men of very opposite temperaments are not readily drawn together, and there must have been much in the almost feverish energy of the Apostle of the Gentiles which would not at once win the sympathies of the beloved disciple. Besides this, the glimpse which we are allowed to see of John shows him still devoted to the outward life of the Jewish system. He was a daily worshipper in the Temple at the stated hours of prayer, and remembered even to his last days—though with ever-widening vision and ever-deepening insight into the meaning of the words—that "salvation was from the Jews." One, therefore, who loved peace as he loved it—one who could only be prepared by the training of experience for the immense development which the Church was to undergo from its earlier conditions in the days of Galilee—one who as a mystic lived in the absorbing realisation of a Divine idea—would hold aloof from the loud questions which began to agitate the Church,

and almost unconsciously would feel inclined to shrink from him who stirred them up. It is easy to conceive that to one trained as John had been in the intensest feelings of nationality, and in the most absolute devotion to the Law, the characteristics of St. Paul were not attractive. Paul's breadth and cosmopolitanism, his emancipation from Judaic prejudices, his vehement dialectics, his irresistible personality, his daring expressions, the independence of his course of action, the bitter feelings which he kindled in the hearts of men among whom John lived, and whom he could not but respect—all tended to prevent any close union between the two. When Saul first returned from Damascus an ardent and controversial convert, St. John seems to have been absent from Jerusalem.[1] At any rate, St. Paul did not see him, either on that occasion or on his subsequent visit to convey to the elders the alms of the Gentiles at Antioch. But on the occasion of the third visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem with Barnabas, in order to settle the question—so momentous to the future of the Church—whether or not the yoke of circumcision, and therewith of all Levitism, was to be laid on the necks of the Gentiles—St. Paul tells us that St. John *was* at Jerusalem as one of the Three Pillar-Apostles, and that he met him in conference. I have elsewhere described that most important scene in the history of the world. St. John was at that time by conviction a fervid Jewish Christian. He was living with and acting with the Jewish Christians, side by side with St. Peter, who at Jerusalem conformed to all their usages. Both of them—though all three "were held to be pillars"—were overshadowed by the commanding personality of

[1] Gal. i. 19.

the Lord's brother, St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem. Between the first reception of the delegates from Antioch and the stormy meeting in which the question was debated, St. Paul, with the consummate statesmanship which was one of his intellectual gifts, had privately secured the assent of the three leaders of the Church to his views and proposals. All three were convinced; all three gave to him and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; all three recognised their mission to the Gentiles. Nay, they not only *recognised* this mission, but formally handed it over to the care of those who had hitherto been its all but exclusive ministers. They made to Paul and Barnabas but two requests—both most readily granted: the one that they should themselves be left undisturbed in the ministry of the circumcision; the other that the needs of the poor saints at Jerusalem should not be overlooked in the wealthier churches of the Gentiles. The fact of this mutual recognition—this interchange of Christian pledges in a spirit of friendship—is the best answer to the dreams of those who would persuade us that St. John, in the Apocalypse, condescended to attack St. Paul himself, as well as his followers, in language of unmitigated hate.

This seems to have been the only occasion—at any rate, it is the only one known to us—on which there was any meeting between the Beloved Disciple and the Apostle of the Gentiles. St. John took no part in the great debate. He seems to have shrunk from everything which bore any resemblance to noisy publicity. On this occasion he left the speaking to St. Peter and St. James, only supporting their concession by his vote and silent acquiescence. His was not the temperament which delights, as did that of St. Paul, in ruling the stormy

elements of popular assemblies. In the earlier days, when he and Peter worked together in close communion, it is Peter who on every occasion comes forward as the chief speaker. Yet we must not infer from this that the relation of John to the elder Apostle was at all like that which subsequently arose between Paul and Barnabas. In the first missionary journey Paul took the lead by virtue of his superior intellect and more vigorous energy. He was, in human estimate, the abler and greater of the two. It was not so with St. Peter. His, doubtless, was the readier, the more practical, the more oratorical ability; but, judging by their writings, we should again say that in human estimate St. John's was the profounder and more gifted soul. But his sphere was by no means the sphere of daily struggles and controversies—

> "Greatest souls
> Are often those of whom the noisy world
> Hears least."

We can think of St. John in the cave at Patmos; we cannot fancy him addressing a yelling mob on the steps of Castle Antonia. His was to be a very different, yet a no less necessary work. It was his to be guided by the Spirit through the education of outward circumstances to truths deeper, richer, more comprehensive, more final than it had been granted even to St. Paul to set forth.

From this time we lose sight of St. John in Holy Scripture, so far as any external record or notice of him is concerned. All our further knowledge respecting the outward incidents of his life is reducible to the fact that when he wrote the Apocalypse he was "in the

isle that is called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." But, meagre as is this one personal fact, we learn much respecting him from early tradition, and from the precious legacy of his own writings. From these sources we are able to trace the Apostle in his advance towards Christian perfection —in the expansion of his enlightened intellect, in the deepening of his universal love.

It will be better to separate the story of his remaining years as it is handed down to us by early tradition, from the proofs furnished by his own writings of his gradual growth in the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet tradition helps us to realise the conditions under which the beautiful but partial dawn which we witness on the banks of Jordan and the shores of Galilee broadened at last into the perfect day.

Many details of his history are left in the deepest obscurity. During a period of at least eighteen years we neither know where he lived nor what he did. In the New Testament we lose sight of him in A.D. 50, at the date of the Synod of Jerusalem; we do not meet with him again till we find him in the isle called Patmos, in A.D. 68.

Perhaps some readers may feel surprise that the latter date should be given with any confidence. It was the general belief of antiquity that his residence in Patmos was owing to his banishment. Even this has been disputed on the ground that it is only an inference from his expression that he was there "because of the word of God and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ." These words have been interpreted by some to mean that he retired from Ephesus to the seclusion of the rocky islet in order to concentrate his

mind on the thoughts and visions which were being revealed to him. There are, however, no certain grounds for setting aside the old tradition. It furnishes the most natural interpretation of his language, and well accords with his saying that he was "the companion" of those to whom he was writing, "in their tribulation, and in the kingdom and endurance of Jesus Christ." But the date of this banishment, if banishment it were, is most variously conjectured. Epiphanius[1] says that it took place in the reign of Claudius; Theophylact and the superscription of a Syrian MS. say that it was in the reign of Nero. Irenæus,[2] Jerome,[3] and Sulpicius Severus[4] agree that it was in the reign of Domitian, and Eusebius in his *Chronicon* places St. John's banishment in the fourteenth year of that reign;[5] Dorotheus places it in the reign of Trajan. On the other hand, Clemens of Alexandria[6] and Tertullian[7] do not venture to name the particular emperor, and Origen[8] observes that St. John himself is silent on the subject. But—as I hope to show hereafter—there can be no reasonable doubt respecting the date of the Apocalypse, and therefore none as to St. John's stay in Patmos, if, as I myself believe, he was the author of that book. That he was the author is the all but unanimous testimony of antiquity from the days of Justin Martyr to those of the great Fathers of the third century, and it is, I believe, the inference to which the book itself most decisively points. The notion that it was written either by John the

[1] *Haer.* li. 33.
[2] Iren. *c. Haer.* v. 30, 3.
[3] *De Virr. Illustr.* 9.
[4] *Sacr. Hist.* ii. 31.
[5] *H. E.* iii. 18; xx. 23; and *Chron.* He says he returned from exile in the reign of Trajan.
[6] *Quis div. Salv.* 42.
[7] *De Praescr. Haer.* 36.
[8] *Comm. in Matt.* iii. p. 719.

Presbyter, or by the Evangelist John Mark,[1] requires for its support far weightier and more decisive evidence than any which modern ingenuity has even attempted to provide.

Of this hiatus of eighteen years in the life of the great Apostle tradition has very little to tell us, and what it does tell us is of no value. That he left Jerusalem is certain, and he probably left it for ever. This *may* have been at the end of the twelve years during which, as tradition says, Jesus had bidden His Apostles to stay in the Holy City;[2] but, more probably, it was at a much later period. What were the circumstances which induced him to leave his own home,[3] we cannot tell, but it may have been the result of that terrible combat between Romish oppression and Jewish exasperation which arose during the Procuratorships of Albinus and Gessius Florus. We have seen that the agitation which affected the minds even of Christian Jews had given occasion to the warnings of the Bishop of Jerusalem that "a man's wrath worketh not the righteousness of God." The death of the Virgin,[4] the murder of "the Lord's brother" —perhaps precipitated by his own stern rebukes—the meditated flight of the Christians to Pella—the actual outbreak of the Jewish war, any of these may have been St. John's motive for thus changing the settled habits

[1] Beza, *Prolegg. in Apoc.*; Hitzig, *Ueber Joh. Markus*, 1843.

[2] Apollonius, *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* v. 18; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vi. 5, quoting from the *Praedicatio Petri.*

[3] τὰ ἴδια, John xix. 27.

[4] Nicephorus, *H. E.* ii. 42. There is nothing to be said for the conjecture of Baronius and Tillemont that the Virgin accompanied St. John to Asia. οὐδαμοῦ λέγεται ὅτι ἐπηγάγετο μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον (Epiphan. *Haer.* lxxviii. § 11). This statement was made at the Council of Ephesus (Labbe, *Concil.* iii. 547).

of his life. Perhaps by this time, when a race of young men was growing up around him to whom the Crucifixion was but a tale which they heard from the lips of their fathers, he may have been led to the conviction that the day of Jerusalem had passed away for ever, that Jewish obduracy had finally hardened itself against the message of the Gospel. Any peace which the Church of Jerusalem had enjoyed had been owing to the famines, and political troubles, which had diverted the attention of the Jews from the Christians to the desperate struggle against the encroachments of the Romans and their Herodian nominees. Perhaps it had been due, to an even greater degree, to the legal "righteousness" of St. James, his faithfulness to all Jewish traditions, his conciliatory and respectful attitude towards the Mosaic Law. But the death of James seemed to open a new chapter in the history of the Mother Church. Simon, son of Alphæus, another kinsman of Christ according to the flesh, was chosen to succeed him. St. John may have felt that his work at Jerusalem was now finished; that his thoughts had ripened; that his labours were needed in wider regions of the mission field. Of this we are sure—that he would leave himself to be guided in all the main decisions of his life by the influence of the Holy Spirit of God.[1]

[1] He may even have stayed in Jerusalem till Nero sent Vespasian to suppress the Jewish revolt (Luke xxi. 20; Jos. *B. J.* ii. 25; Euseb. iii. 5). One tradition says that on leaving Jerusalem he went and preached to the Parthians. It rests on such very shadowy foundation that it may safely be set aside (see Lampe, p. 48, and *supra*, p. 114). Even if there were not some strange error in St. Augustine's reference to his Epistle as being written "to the *Parthians*" (*Quaest. Evang.* ii. 19), his writing to them would not prove that he had preached among them, and there is no trace that he did.

Two common legends account for his presence in Patmos by a supernatural deliverance from martyrdom. It is said that he was plunged into a caldron full of boiling oil at the Latin gate of Rome, and so far from suffering, only came out of the caldron more vigorous and youthful than before.[1] Another story, frequently represented in Christian art, says that an attempt was made to kill him by a poisoned chalice, but that "it was rendered harmless when he signed over it the sign of the cross, and the poison fled from it in the form of a little asp."[2] The silence of Irenæus, Hippolytus, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Sulpicius Severus, and many others is alone sufficient to prove that these are unauthorised fables.

But these legends bring us face to face with the question, Was St. John ever at Rome? It is true that the legends furnish no conclusive evidence, and that there is no authentic trace of St. John's visit to Rome in the history of the Roman Church.[3] On the other hand, there is throughout the Apocalypse so intensely

[1] Tert. *de Praescr. Haer.* 36, "in oleum igneum demersus, nihil passus est." Jer. *adv. Jovin.* i. 26, and *in Matt.* xx. 23; Origen, *in Matt., Hom.* 12. Baronius says truly enough of Tertullian that he was so credulous that he would snatch up any old woman's story with avidity (*Annal.* A.D. 201). On these two legends see the various references in Zahn, *Acta Joannis*, cxvii.—cxxii.

[2] Augustine, *Soliloq.*; Isidor. Hispalensis, *De Vit. et Mort. Sanct.* 73; Ps. Abdias, *Hist. Apost.* v. 20 (Fabric. *Cod. Apocr.* ii. 575); Cave, *Lives of the Apostles.* Papias tells the same story of Joses Barsabbas, and it may be allegorically deduced from Mark xvi. 18.

[3] It is curious that in the Latin translation of the *Journeys of the Divine* (περιόδοι) by the Pseudo-Prochorus (*Bibl. Patr.* 1677), an attempt is made to fix his martyrdom at Rome. The MS. was found in the library of the monastery of St. Christodulus in Patmos. See Zahn, *Acta Joannis*, p. 191. Tischendorf, *Act. Apocr.* 266—271. Hippolytus exclaims "Tell me, blessed John, what didst thou see and hear about Babylon?" *De Christ. et Antichrist.* 36.

vivid a realisation of the horrors of the Neronian persecution, and the wickedness of the agents by which it was brought about, that we feel strongly inclined to believe that the visions of that book reflect the terrible experiences of an eye-witness. St. John may have reached Rome as St. Peter and St. Paul did, either as an Evangelist or as a prisoner, during the final spasms of that dreadful movement which first caused the blood of martyrdom to flow in rivers. In any case the Apocalypse is the echo of a harp whose perturbed strings have been smitten by fierce and bloodstained hands, and then have been swept by the mighty wind of inspiration. St. John did not indeed perish as did his brother Apostles during those years of horror, but the legends of the poison-cup and the boiling oil may be dim reflections of the narrowness of the escape which ended in what was (perhaps erroneously) believed to be his deportation to a rocky island, and his condemnation to toil as a labourer in its quarries.[1]

We must, however, be content to remain in ignorance as to the causes of his presence in Patmos. The tone of his letter to the Seven Churches speaks of an intimate knowledge of their circumstances, and the possession of an unquestioned authority over them. He must have resided in Asia Minor before we find him at Patmos, and the attempt to prove that his connection with Ephesus is apocryphal must be pronounced to have egregiously failed. That attempt, first made by Lützelberger, in 1840, has been

[1] Victorinus and Primasius say that he was "in *metallum* damnatus." There are no mines in Patmos, but *metallum* may mean "a stone-quarry." It was not one of the islands usually selected for deportations.

seriously followed up by Keim, in 1867,[1] and by the Dutch theologian Scholten, in 1871,[2] but it surely shows "the very intemperance of negation." Not only Baur, and Strauss, and Renan, but even the most advanced followers of the Tübingen school—such as Schwegler, Zeller, and Volkmar—admitted the cogency of the evidence for a fact which till the last ten years has been universally accepted. The notion that the Apostle John was mistaken for the Presbyter John—if ever there was such a person—is wholly baseless. Even if we accept the wild conjecture that the Apocalypse is by John Mark the Evangelist, or by the supposed Presbyter John—conjectures which crumble to nothing before the first serious examination—it results from the whole manner and phraseology of the book that the writer *meant* himself to be regarded as the Apostle. And such being the case, it is equally clear that his residence in Asia Minor is assumed as a thing well known to all readers of the book. It would have been absurd for a forger to start with an assumption which, if false, would at once have proved that he was not the person whom he pretended to be. Even if we set aside the authority of such men as St. Clemens of Alexandria,[3] and Origen,[4] the fact that St. Polycarp, in A.D. 160,[5] who had actually seen and heard the Apostle, appeals to his authority for the Eastern custom of keeping Easter on Nisan 14, ought alone to be decisive. Polycrates, in A.D. 190, who as

[1] Keim, *Jesu von Nazara*, i. 161—167; iii. 44—45.

[2] Scholten, *Der Apost. Joann. in Klein-Azie* (Leyden).

[3] Clem. Alex. *Quis Div. Salv.* § 42, and *ap.* Euseb. iii. 23.

[4] Orig. *in Gen.* (Euseb. iii. 1, 1).

[5] Tert. *De Praescr. Haer.* 32; Jer. *De Virr. Illustr.* 17; *Chron. Pasch.* p. 252. Waddington places the martyrdom of Polycarp in 154 or 155.

Bishop of Ephesus was a man likely to be well informed, made the same appeal,[1] as also did St. Irenæus in his letter to Florinus.[2] When we remember the statement of St. Irenæus that as a boy (about A.D. 150) he had heard from the mouth of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and many other elders, many memorable things about John, the Lord's disciple, who, as a successor to St. Paul, lived in Ephesus, wrote the Revelation and the Gospel, and died at a great age in the reign of Trajan,[3]—does it not require an extraordinary stretch of credulity to suppose that he made a confusion between John the Bosom-friend of the Lord, the beloved Apostle and Evangelist, the immortal survivor of the Apostolic choir, and a "nebulous presbyter," whose very existence is problematical? And who can believe that when Polycrates ranks John with the Apostle Philip as "the two great stars of Asia,"[4] he is thinking only of this dubious presbyter? Eusebius does indeed in one place (iii. 39) infer from a well-known passage that Papias had been a personal hearer of Aristion and John the Presbyter, and *not* of John the Apostle. In the style of Papias, so inartificial and inexact, it cannot be regarded as certain that this is his meaning; but even if it is, the inference drawn from this, that St. John had not lived in Asia, has no weight against the clear statements of Polycarp and Irenæus. It has never been doubted that Cerinthus taught in Asia, and from the first the Church has, in

[1] *Ap.* Euseb. v. 18, 24. Comp. *Haer.* III. iii. 4.

[2] Euseb. v. 20, 24.

[3] Surely this testimony more than outweighs the mere *silence* of Ignatius (*ad Eph.* 12; *ad Trall.* 5).

[4] *Ap.* Euseb. *H.E.* iii. 31. I believe, with Renan, that the Philip intended was the Apostle not the Deacon.

many ways, connected the names of Cerinthus and St. John. By a strange fatality the writings of St. John were actually attributed to Cerinthus (*against* whom they were perhaps written) by the Alogi, who denied the doctrine of the Logos.[1] A scholar so accomplished as Dionysius of Alexandria, in expressing his doubts about the Apocalypse, thinks it worth while to record the legend that Cerinthus had written it, and fraudulently prefixed to it the name of John.[2] But even if it should be proved that the Apocalypse was not written by John, it still bears decisive testimony to the belief that he was the acknowledged head of the Christians of Asia.

Relegating to the Excursus[3] the intricate inquiry as to the *identity* of the Apostle with John the Presbyter, we may here be allowed to assume that the belief of the Church—unquestioned for nineteen centuries—is still to be accepted. It is not difficult to discover why St. John should have fixed his new home in the famous capital of Proconsular Asia. The Church in that city was large and flourishing. It stood at the head of many churches of great importance. The position of the city as an emporium of the Mediterranean made it an eminently favourable centre for missionary labours. The Christians of Asia were liable to severe temptations, and had long been tried by the influx of various errors. Everything called for the presence of St. John. St. Paul was imprisoned, if not dead, and had, at any rate, bidden farewell to

[1] Epiphan. *Haer.* li. 3. The other Fathers are unanimous—Chrys. *Praef. in Ephes.*; Theod. Mops. *Prooem. in Cat. Patr.*; Tert. *c. Marc.* iv. 5.

[2] *Ap.* Euseb. iii. 28.

[3] See Excursus XIV.

Ephesus for ever.[1] The other Apostles were scattered or dead. The Church, largely composed of Judaising Christians, naturally looked for the support of an Apostle from Jerusalem. St. John was alone available for the work; nor is it impossible that he may have felt all the more need to obey the call because, like St. James, he may have been aware of the danger which arose from the perversion of St. Paul's teaching by Gnostic and Antinomian heresiarchs, who were ever mixing it up with alien elements borrowed from Greek or Eastern speculation.

That St. John's individual leanings long continued to be in favour of the Judaists is proved by the impression which he left upon the minds of those with whom he had lived[2]; as well as by the countenance he gave to the Quartodecimans, who kept the Passover on the 14th of Nisan. It is proved most of all by the general tone of the Apocalypse, which, amid many resemblances, differs so widely from that of the Gospel and Epistles. That the Apocalypse was written many years before the Gospel and Epistles, ought to be regarded as a certain conclusion. The difference of style alone—apart from the deeper differences on which I shall dwell hereafter—is sufficient to prove it. The Greek of the Gospels and Epistles, though Hebraic in the structure of its sentences, is yet perfectly smooth

[1] Acts xx. 25, 38.

[2] *E.g.*, by the story that he was a priest (ἱερεύς) wearing the high-priestly mitre, Ex. xxviii. 36 (Polycr. *ap.* Euseb. v. 24). But it must be borne in mind that St. John regarded all Christians not only as priests, but as high priests (i. 6; xx. 6; and ii. 17, where the mystic stone seems to be analogous to the Urim and Thummim which were put inside the ephod). The word "mitre of the faith" is used metaphorically in *Test. XII. Patr.* iii. 8.

and correct. It is the Greek of one who had long been familiar with the language. But the Greek of the Apocalypse is so ungrammatical and so full of solecisms as to be the worst in the entire Greek Testament. Now it is natural that St. John, after so many years in which he had spoken little but Aramaic, should write Greek imperfectly; and that he should subsequently gain power in writing Greek by residence in heathen cities and among a Greek-speaking population. But it is inconceivable that he should have written the Gospel and Epistles in pure Greek, and then, after years of familiar practice, should have come to write the language incomparably worse. The attempts to explain the difference of style by the peculiarities of Apocalyptic writings are impossible after-thoughts, wholly inadequate to account for the phenomena. But besides this, without the invention of a moral miracle, we cannot regard it as possible that, by writing the Apocalypse after the Gospel, St. John could have gone back from clear thought to figures, and have reduced the full expression of truth to its rudimentary indications.[1]

Perhaps it needed nothing less than the fall of Jerusalem to teach to St. John, as it taught to most Jewish Christians, that though Judaism had been the cradle of Christianity it was not to be its grave. Their intense belief in the symbolism of the Mosaic worship, their identification of faithfulness and orthodoxy with obedience to the Levitic law, were opinions so inveterate that nothing could shake them save that visible interposition which, when Christianity was fairly planted in the world, rendered *impossible* the fulfilment

[1] On this subject see Canon Westcott, *Introd. to Gospel*, p. lxxxvi.

of Mosaic ordinances. The extreme Judaisers had so long encouraged themselves in the belief that St. Paul was a dangerous, if not a wicked, teacher, that they could not be convinced that after all they had been immeasurably inferior to him in insight, until their eyes were opened by the catastrophe which closed the order of the old ages, and which was the First Coming of Christ. St. John of course would not have agreed with these Judaisers in their extreme views, but no one can read his Gospel and Epistles, written some time after the destruction of Jerusalem, without seeing how much his knowledge of the truth had been widened since he wrote the Apocalypse in the days when the Holy City had not as yet been made a heap of stones.

It has been said, and with scarcely any exaggeration, that the Apocalypse is of all the books in the New Testament the most intensely Jewish, and the Fourth Gospel the least so. In the Apocalypse "Jew" is a term of the highest honour; in the Gospel it usually describes the enemies of Jesus, the Pharisees and Priests. Yet these differences are capable of explanation, and we must remember that they are found in connexion with close resemblances. Even in the Gospel there is no higher eulogy than "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

We must be content to remain in uncertainty as to the chronology of this part of St. John's life, and as to the circumstances which took him to Ephesus.[1]

[1] A legend preserved by the author of the *Life of Timotheus*, of which some extracts are furnished by Photius, says that he was shipwrecked on the coast of Ephesus during the Neronian persecution. It is also mentioned by Simeon Metaphrastes, *Vit. Joh.* 2 (Lampe, *Proleg.* p. 46).

We may, however, be sure that his residence alike in the rocky islet and in the thronged Ionian capital were very fruitful in his divine education. In Ephesus he saw—perhaps for the first time—the wicked glittering life of a great Gentile city, with its merchandise not only of fine linen, and purple and scarlet, and vessels of ivory and precious wood, and amomum, and incense, and wine, and horses, and chariots,—but also of "*slaves, and souls of men.*" There, on the centre of the western coast of Asia Minor, he could as from a beacon-tower look back over the plains and valleys watered by the Hermus and Mæander, and while he kept watch over all the Churches of Asia, his voice could sound like a trumpet of God over the Isles of Greece, and westward to the great cities of Greece and Italy, and Gaul and Spain.[1] Amid that busy scene, with its harbour thronged with the sails of the civilised world, and its Temple frequented by nations of worshippers, there could have been little time for contemplation in the midst of the work which life in such a city entailed upon a Christian Apostle. But in his retirement at Patmos, whether voluntary or compulsory, he would have leisure for peaceful thought. Patmos, with its strangely shattered configuration, is little more than a huge rock, and it can never have had many inhabitants, In its grotto of La Scala, on its bare hills, by its projecting promontories, as he sat alone—with man distant from him, but God near—he could meditate in undisturbed devotion. He might naturally pass into mystic ecstacy, as he sat under some grey olive and looked up in prayer to the glow of heaven, or gazed on the

[1] Magdeb. *Eccl. Hist. Cent.* ii. 2; see too Chrysost. *Hom.* i. *in Johan.*

silent expanse of the sea, which under the burning sun gleams so often like a sea of glass mingled with fire. No outward circumstances could have been more providentially ordered to bring out his noblest faculties than the interchange of a life spent "amid the madding crowd's ignoble strife," with one spent in seclusion and solitude, wherein he could commune with his own thoughts and hear the voice of God speaking to him, and be still.[1]

The history of Patmos itself throws no light on this interesting subject. It is scarcely alluded to by any ancient author, which is the more surprising because it furnished a convenient point at which vessels could touch on their way from Ephesus to Italy. It is only mentioned incidentally by Pliny and Strabo,[2] and there seem to be no adequate grounds for Renan's assertion that in the first century it was very populous. A sterile rock, about eighteen miles in circumference,[3] can never have been important. We have no mention of its being used for the deportation of criminals, and when

[1] "Patmos ressemble à toutes les Iles de l'Archipel: mer d'azur, air limpide, ciel serein, rochers aux sommets dentelés, à peine revêtus par moments d'un leger duvet de verdure. L'aspect est nu et stérile; mais les formes et la couleur du roc, le bleu vif de la mer, sillonnée de beaux oiseaux blancs, opposé aux teints rougeâtres des rochers sont quelque chose d'admirable" (Renan, *l'Antéchrist*, p. 376). "Silent lay the little island before me in the morning twilight. Here and there an olive breaks the monotony of the rocky waste. The sea was still as the grave. Patmos reposed in it like a dead saint. . . . John—that is the thought of the island. The island belongs to him; it is his sanctuary. The stones speak of him, and in every heart he lives" (Tischendorf, *Reise in's Morgenland*, ii. 257; see too Ross, *Reisen auf griech. Inseln*, ii. 123, and Guérin, *Descr. de l'Ile de Patmos*, 1856). It consists of three masses of rock united by narrow isthmuses.

[2] Strabo, x. p. 488; Pliny, *H. N.* iv. 12; Thuc. iii. 23.

[3] Tournefort, *Voy. du Levant*, i. 168. In his time there were only 300 inhabitants. See on Patmos, Stanley's *Sermons in the East*, p. 230.

St. John says that he was there "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus," the phrase is indecisive. Patmos was, indeed, so completely in the highway of the Icarian sea, and its port was so convenient, that it would not, under ordinary circumstances, have suited the object for which islands were selected as places of exile. It is curious that the pseudo-Prochorus in his *Periodoi* says nothing about any banishment to Patmos, and does not even mention the Apocalypse, but says that St. John went there to write his Gospel. We can trace no special influences of the scenery on his mind, unless it be in the mention of "a burning mountain in the midst of the sea," which may be a reminiscence of the then active volcano of Santorin, the ancient Thera.[1]

[1] Pliny, *H. N.* iv. 12, § 23; Sen. *Qu. Nat.* ii. 26; vi. 21. But it is just as easy to suppose that St. John may have sailed past Stromboli in going to Rome.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LEGENDS OF ST. JOHN.

Δεῖ δε καὶ παραδόσει χρῆσθαι. οὐ γὰρ πάντα ἀπὸ τῆς θείας γραφῆς δύναται λαμβάνεσθαι.—EPIPHAN. *Haer.* lxi. 1.

No account of St. John would be complete without some estimate of the many legends which cluster round his later years. We may say at once that some of them, if true at all, belong—in spirit at any rate—far more to the epoch in which he wrote the Apocalypse than to that in which he wrote the Gospel.

1. One of the best-known of these tells us that once at Ephesus he was entering into one of the great public baths (thermæ), when he was informed that Cerinthus was in the building. Thereupon he instantly turned away, exclaiming, "Let us fly, that the thermæ fall not on our heads, since Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is therein."[1] In another version of the anecdote, given by Epiphanius, the name of the mythical Ebion[2] is substituted for that of Cerinthus, and this variation happily serves to throw great doubt on a story which is still quoted with applause by religious partisans, because it is supposed to furnish a sanction for violent religious animosities. We catch, indeed, in this story the old tone of the passion and

[1] Iren. *c. Haer.* iii. 3; Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 28; iv. 14; Theodoret, ii. 3; Nicephorus, iii. 30. Besides the original authorities here quoted, I may refer to Lampe (*Proleg.* 68), Krenkel (*Der Apostel Johannes*, pp. 21—32), and Stanley (*Sermons on the Apostolic Age*).

[2] Epiphan. *Haer.* xxx. 24.

intolerance of the Son of Thunder, at a period of his life when we might have hoped, from other indications, that he had climbed to that region "where above these voices there is peace." Cerinthus was a Jewish Christian, and the earliest of the Christian Gnostics. He was one of those who believed in two principles, making a distinction between God and the Demiurgus or Creator.[1] Further than this, he was one of the founders of Docetism, in that form of it which spoke of "Jesus" as being a mere man, on whom "Christ," the Son of the Most High God, had descended at His baptism in the form of a dove, leaving Him again at the moment of His crucifixion. We can understand how abhorrent such views would be to St. John; how they would run counter to his inmost and most precious convictions. But in the idly superstitious notion that the thermæ must therefore necessarily fall and crush the heretic, we could only trace (were the story true) the spirit which had once wished to perform Elijah-miracles of fire—the spirit of one who forgot for the moment that Christ came to save, not to destroy — that God maketh His sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth His rain upon the just and upon the unjust.[2]

[1] Iren. *c. Haer.* i. 25; Hippol. *Philosoph.* vii. 33.

[2] "A man," said the Rabbis, "should not wade through water, or traverse any dangerous place, in company with an apostate, or even a wicked Jew, lest he be overtaken in the same ruin with him" (*Kitzur Sh'lah*, f. 10, *b*). This is not the spirit of Eph. v. 7, or Rev. xviii. 4, which forbid, not the ordinary intercourse of life, which St. Paul expressly told his converts that he did *not* mean to forbid (1 Cor. v. 10), but participation in the *sins* of others. It is more like the heathen notion—

"Vetabo qui Cereris sacrum
Vulgarit arcanum sub isdem
Sit trabibus, fragilemve mecum
Solvat phaselon," etc.

By entering the same baths, St. John would certainly not have been

There is another reason for *hoping* that this favourite story of religious hatred is a fabrication. It was not the usual custom of Jews to frequent the public baths. They could hardly do so without rendering themselves liable to the grossest insults. Further, the baths were almost invariably adorned with statues, and it would have been strange indeed if those statues were not sometimes those of heathen deities. The iconoclasm of the Jew made such places detestable to him, and it was thought an instance of reprehensible laxity when the younger Gamaliel entered a bath which contained one of the common statues of Aphrodite.[1] Then, too, the Ionian baths were thought to be very luxurious. We are told that for this reason they were never used by St. James.[2] Epiphanius also asserts that St. John "used neither bath nor oil."[3] Cerinthus was surely not worse than thousands of bad Christians and worse Pagans—Pagans dyed in every extreme of vice—whom St. John would be quite sure to encounter if he went to public baths at all. Strange to say—heretical as were the speculations of Cerinthus—he is actually asserted by one ancient writer to have been the author of the Apocalypse. That conjecture is absurd, but it surely shows that Cerinthus—who, in virtue of his restless and impressionable nature, has thus become "the spectre of St. John"—could not have been so flagrantly wicked as to render it dangerous to be

supposed by any human being to make himself a "partaker of the evil deeds" of Cerinthus (2 John 10, 11).

[1] *Avoda Zara*, f. 44, *b*. The excuse which the Rabbi made, "that the statue was a mere appendage of the bath," showed more good sense than the impetuous conduct ascribed to the Apostle.

[2] Iren. *c. Haer.* v. 33.

[3] Epiphan. *Haer.* lxxviii. 14.

under the same roof with him! The story is surrounded by difficulties, and I for one am glad to dismiss it from my memories of the holy Apostle, as an anachronism in the history of his life, and wholly unworthy of the later period of his career. If there be any truth in it, it can only be regarded as an expiring flash of that old intolerance which Christ had reproved; or again, any slight basis of truth in it may be reducible to the utterance of a strong metaphor by way of expressing marked disapproval.[1] In that case the Apostle would not have meant it to be taken literally and *d'un trop grand sérieux*. That it was so taken is due to Polycarp—through whom we get the story third-hand in Irenæus—and of Epiphanius, who repeats it fourth or fifth-hand, and tells it wrongly. Polycarp, who would not notice Marcion in the streets, and when challenged as an acquaintance replied—not surely in the true Christian spirit, which is peaceable and meek and gentle—"Yes, I know thee, the first-born of Satan;" Irenæus, who tells these stories with approval; Epiphanius, who spent his credulous age in hunting for heresy in the dioceses of wiser men and better saints than himself—would not have been likely to soften the features of an anecdote which had an evil effect even on the

[1] Epiphanius, though glad to retain the story, is puzzled by the visit to the baths, and thinks that it must have been a quite unusual, providential visit; that he must have gone "compelled by the Holy Spirit" (*ἠναγκάσθη ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος*), to give him an opportunity for the valuable anathema! Baronius (*Annal. ad* A.D. 74) thinks to reconcile Epiphanius with Irenæus by the suggestion that perhaps *both* Cerinthus and Ebion (!) might have been in the bath, a conjecture which Ittigius (*DeHaeresiarchis*, p. 58) approves. See on the story generally, Lampe, *Proleg.* p. 69. I am sorry that Holtzmann should say (Schenkel, *Bib. Lex.*, *s. v. Joh. d. Apost.*) "Diese Tradition ist von allen . . . die glaubwürdigste," assigning as his reason its accordance with the character of St. John.

saintly mind of John Keble, and is but too dear to the *odium ecclesiasticum*.[1]

2. Another curious story was current in the Churches of Asia long after the Apostle's death. It rests upon the authority of Papias,[2] who professes to have heard it from Polycarp and others, who had heard it from St. John. It is as follows:—"The Elders who had seen John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they heard from him how the Lord used to teach about those times, and to say, 'The days will come in which vines shall spring up, each having ten thousand stems, and on each stem ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand clusters, and on each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall give five-and-twenty measures of wine. And when any saint shall have seized one cluster, another shall cry, "I am a better cluster, take me; through me bless the Lord."' And he used to add, 'These things are believable to believers.' And when Judas the traitor did not believe, and asked, 'How will such products be created by the Lord?' the Lord said, 'They shall see who shall come to those times.'"[3]

[1] Dean Stanley (*Sermons on the Apostolic Age*, p. 273), to show how stories do not lose by repetition, quotes the purely imaginary sequel of the story in Jeremy Taylor (*Life of Christ*, xii. 2), that the bath *did* fall down, and Cerinthus was crushed in the ruins! Jeremy Taylor, however, was not the inventor of this story. It is first found in the *Elenchus Haeresium*, by Prateolus ("*De suo* addit Prateolus, etc., at apud primitivae ecclesiae auctores altum est de hac re silentium" (Ittigius, *Haeresiarch.* p. 58).

[2] On Papias see the Excursus on "John the Presbyter."

[3] Iren. *Haer.* v. 33, 3.; Euseb. *H. E.* iii. *ad fin.*; Routh, *Rel. Sacr.* p. 9. Grabe rightly observes that the narrative must be reckoned among the *μυθικώτερά τινα* and *ξέναι παραβολαί*, which Eusebius charges Papias with recording.

What are we to make of this strange story? It comes to us only fifth-hand, in a free Latin translation of a passage of Papias; and Papias, on whose authority it rests, was generally looked on as a weak and credulous person. To make it still more suspicious, it is found also in the Apocalypse of Baruch. As to its right to belong to the *agrapha dogmata*, or unrecorded sayings of Christ, two suppositions alone are possible—either that it rests on no foundation, or that it is due to an unintelligent literalism which has mistaken some bright symbol used by our Lord in the genial human intercourse of His happier hours. He may have been speaking with His Apostles of the festal anticipations which, in the common notions of the people, were mingled with their Messianic hopes; and in touching on their true aspect—the aspect which, for instance, makes the wedding festival a picture of the Lord's kingdom—He may have used some such words in the half-playful irony which marks some of the finer shades of His familiar language. Perhaps He may only have meant to expose the carnal notions of Jewish chiliasm, which appear again and again in the teaching of the Rabbis. If so, St. John—fond at that time, as the Apocalypse shows, of material symbolism—may, with due oral explanation, have repeated some of His words. A literal-minded hearer like Polycarp may have repeated the tale on the authority of St. John, while he robbed it of all the *nuances* which alone gave it any beauty or significance.[1] It would become still more prosaic and material in the writings

[1] So Eusebius says of Papias that he failed to understand the apostolic traditions which he received, *τὰ ἐν ὑποδείγμασι πρὸς αὐτῶν μυθικῶς εἰρημένα μὴ συνεωρακότα* (*H. E.* iii. 39).]

of a commonplace reporter, and the last traces of its real bearing might easily evaporate in the loose translation and paraphrase of Irenæus.

In this point of view the story has a real value. It shows us that we can only attach a modified credence to any report intrinsically improbable, even when it comes to us attested by one who professes to have known at least two of the Disciples of the Lord.[1] If the anecdote be based upon fact at all, it has come to us so reflected and refracted through the medium of a weak mind as to have lost its real significance. Experience shows that a story told second-hand, even by an honest narrator, may be so tinged in the narrator's subjectivity as to convey an impression positively false. We are thus obliged to discount the tales and remarks for which Irenæus refers us to the authority of "the Elders,"[2] by whom he seems chiefly to mean Papias and Polycarp. Now Eusebius does not hesitate to say that Papias was a source of error to Irenæus and others who relied on his "antiquity." When Irenæus says that the Pastor of Hermas is canonical; that the head of the Nicolaitans was the Deacon Nicolas; and that the version of the LXX. was written by inspiration;—we know what estimate to put on his appeals to apostolic tradition. But there is one instance of mistake or credulity even more flagrant. The whole Christian world unites in rejecting the assertion that our Lord was fifty years

[1] Namely, Aristion and "the Presbyter John." Renan needlessly conjectures that the true reading of Papias in this passage is ἃ τε Ἀριστίων καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης οἱ τοῦ Κυρίου μαθηταὶ [μαθητῶν] λέγουσι (Euseb. iii. 39).

[2] "Audivi a quodam *Presbytero*; quidam ante nos dixit; ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος ἡμῶν εἴρηται, etc. See his forms of quotation, collected in Westcott, *On the Canon*, p. 80.

old when he died, although Irenæus asserts it on the authority of "elders who received it from the Apostles."[1] If in these particulars Irenæus followed too hastily the credulous Papias, he may have derived the harsher elements of the story about Cerinthus from the aged Polycarp. The *accentuation* of that dubious anecdote is what we should expect from the old man whose way of expressing disapproval of heresy was not to refute it, but indignantly to stop his ears. The description of the passion and vehemence of Polycarp given by Irenæus in his fine letter to Florinus exactly resembles the conduct attributed to St. John. Irenæus says that if Polycarp had heard the views of Florinus, "I can testify before God that the blessed and apostolic elder, crying out loud, and stopping his ears, and *exclaiming in his usual fashion, 'Oh, good God, to what times hast thou kept me alive, that I endure such things!' would have fled away from the place in which he had been sitting or standing when he had heard such words.*" Here we have indeed the story of St. John and Cerinthus in all its distinctive features! But how ineffectual and how little Christ-like is such a method of meeting error! How widely does it differ from the calm reasoning, and "*Ye therefore do greatly err,*" of the Divine Master! Neither Papias nor Irenæus are safe authorities for stories like these. Papias has evidently fallen into some confusion, and Irenæus has probably mixed up his reminiscences of Polycarp with Polycarp's reminiscences of St. John.[2]

3. Far different is another story related for us at

[1] See for these opinions Iren. i. 26; ii. 22; iii. 21; v. 20, § 2.

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 20. See some excellent remarks in Lampe's *Prolegomena*, pp. 67—71.

full length by Clemens of Alexandria, and worthy in every respect of the great Apostle. We may assume that it rests on some foundation, because it is full of touches which could not easily have been invented. It shows St. John to us in the full tide of his apostolic activity, appointing and reproving bishops, visiting and directing Churches, and yet finding time to care for individual souls, loving the young, and willing to brave any danger in order to rescue them from temptation. I will tell it mainly in the words of St. Clemens himself.[1]

"But that you may be still more confident, when you have thus truly repented, that there remaineth for thee a trustworthy hope of salvation, hear a legend—nay, not a legend but a true narrative—about John the Apostle, handed down and preserved in memory. When, on the death of the tyrant, he passed over to Ephesus from the island of Patmos, he used to make missionary journeys also to neighbouring Gentile cities, in some places to appoint bishops, and in some to set in order whole Churches, and in some to appoint one of those indicated by the Spirit. On his arrival then at one of the cities at no great distance, of which some even mention the name, ... he saw a youth of stalwart frame and winning countenance, and impetuous spirit, and said to the bishop, 'I entrust to thee this youth

[1] *Quis Div. Salv.* c. 42. Perhaps the life of Apostolic journeyings, of which this story furnishes a trace, may show that even if Timothy was "bishop" of Ephesus there would have been no conflict between his functions and the Apostolic duties of St. John. But we do not know whether Timothy returned to Ephesus or not after the visit to Rome, which we may assume that he made at the urgent summons of St. Paul (2 Tim. iv. 9). The notion of a double succession of bishops—of the circumcision and of the uncircumcision—which is mentioned in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (vii. 46), does not agree with the indications of the Apocalypse.

with all earnestness, calling Christ and the Church to witness.' The bishop accepted the trust, and made all the requisite promises, and the Apostle renewed his injunctions and adjuration. He then returned to Ephesus, and the Elder taking home with him the youth who had been entrusted to his care, maintained, cherished, and finally baptised him. After this he abandoned further care and protection of him, considering that he had affixed to him the seal of the Lord as a perfect amulet against evil. Thus prematurely neglected, the youth was corrupted by certain idle companions of his own age, who were familiar with evil, and who first led him astray by many costly banquets, and then took him out by night with them to share in their felonious proceedings, finally demanding his co-operation in some worse crime. First familiarised with guilt, and then, from the force of his character, starting aside from the straight path like some mighty steed that seizes the bit between its teeth, he rushed towards headlong ruin, and utterly abandoning the Divine salvation, gathered his worst comrades around him, and became a most violent, bloodstained, and reckless bandit-chief. Not long afterwards John was recalled to the city, and after putting other things in order said, 'Come now, O bishop, restore to me the deposit which I and the Saviour entrusted to thee, with the witness of the Church over which thou dost preside.' At first the bishop in his alarm mistook the meaning of the metaphor, but the Apostle said, 'I demand back the young man and the soul of the brother.' Then groaning from the depth of his heart and shedding tears, 'He is dead,' said the bishop. 'How and by what death?' 'He is dead to God! For he has

turned out wicked and desperate, and, to sum up all, a brigand; and now, instead of the Church he has seized the mountain, with followers like himself.' Then the Apostle, rending his robe and beating his head, with loud wailing, said, 'A fine guardian of our brother's soul did I leave! Give me a horse and a guide.' Instantly, as he was, he rode away from the Church, and arriving at the brigands' outposts, was captured without flight or resistance, but crying, 'For this I have come. Lead me to your chief.' The chief awaited him in his armour, but when he recognised John as he approached, he was struck with shame and turned to fly. But John pursued him as fast as he could, forgetful of his age, crying out, 'Why, my son, dost thou fly from thine own father, unarmed, aged as he is? Pity me, my son, fear not; thou hast still a hope of life. I will give account to Christ for thee, should need be. I will willingly abide thy death; the Lord endured the death on our behalf. For thy sake I will give in ransom my own soul. Stay! believe! Christ sent me.' But he on hearing these words first stood with downcast gaze, then flung away his arms, then trembling, began to weep bitterly, and embraced the old man when he came up to him, pleading with his groans, and baptising himself afresh with his tears, only concealing his right hand. But the Apostle, pledging himself to win remission for him from the Saviour by his supplications, kneeling before him, covering with kisses even his right hand as having been cleansed by repentance, led him back to the Church, and praying for him with abundant prayers, and wrestling with him in earnest fastings, and disenchanting him with various winning strains,

he did not depart, as they say, till he restored him to the bosom of the Church, affording a great example of true repentance, and a great badge of renewed birth, a trophy of visible repentance, when in the close of the age the angels receive those who are truly penitent into heavenly habitations, radiantly rejoicing, hymning their hymns, and opening the heavens."[1]

4. Other traditions may be briefly mentioned. One beautiful story rests solely on the authority of the monk Cassian (A.D. 420), and is far too late and unsupported to have any authentic value.[2] It is yet in many respects characteristic. It tells us that St. John, in his hours of rest and recreation, used to amuse himself by playing with a little tame partridge. On one occasion a young hunter, who had greatly desired to see him, could hardly conceal his surprise, and even his disapproval, at finding him thus employed. He doubted for a moment whether this could indeed be the last survivor of the Apostles. "What is that thing which thou carriest in thy hand?" asked St. John. "A bow," replied the hunter. "Why then is it unstrung?" "Because," said the youth, "were I to keep it always strung it would lose its spring, and become useless." "Even so," replied the aged saint, "be not offended at this my brief relaxation, which prevents my spirit from waxing faint."

[1] The *Chronicon Alexandr.* mentions Smyrna as the city. Rufinus, in adding that John made the youth a bishop, seems to be mistaking the meaning of κατέστησε τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ. If, however, the story be well attested, it is strange that no use should have been made of it in the controversies against Tertullian and the Montanists.

[2] Cassian, *Collat.* xxiv. 21. The twenty-four *Collationes* of Cassian are prefixed to the works of John Damascene. See Zahn, p. 190.

The beauty of the anecdote lies far less in the common illustration of the bow which is never unbent, than in the old man's tenderness for the creatures which God had made. The Jews were remarkable among the nations of antiquity for their kindness to dumb animals. Even Moses had taught careless boys not to take the mother bird when they took the young from their nest, and had meant to inculcate the lesson of mercy in the thrice-repeated command: "Thou shalt not seethe the kid in its mother's milk." It is a beautiful Rabbinic legend of the great legislator that once he had followed a lamb far into the wilderness, and when he found it, took it into his arms, saying, "Little lamb, thou knewest not what was good for thee. Come unto me, thy shepherd, and I will bear thee to thy fold." And God said, "Because he has been tender to the straying lamb, he shall be the shepherd of my people Israel." Another Talmudic story will show how much the Jews thought of this duty. Rabbi—the title given by way of pre-eminence to Rabbi Judah Hakkodesh, the compiler of the Mishna—was a great sufferer. One day a calf came bellowing to him, as though to escape slaughter, and laid its head on his lap. But when Rabbi pushed it away with the remark, "Go, for to this wast thou created," they said in heaven, "Lo! he is pitiless; let affliction come upon him." But another day his servant, in sweeping the room, disturbed some kittens, and Rabbi said, "Let them alone; for it is written, 'His tender mercies are over all His works.'" Then they said in heaven, "Let us have pity on him, for he is pitiful."[1]

[1] Bava Metsia, f. 85, *a*.

"He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast.
He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

5. The tradition that St. John lived in Ephesus the life of a rigid ascetic, eating no animal food, having the unshorn locks of a Nazarite, and wearing no garments but linen, has little to recommend it. It rests solely on the authority of Epiphanius, who wrote three centuries after St. John was dead. No hint of it is found in the writings of those who had conversed with friends and pupils of the great Apostle. But when the possibility of Apostolic labours and journeyings was over, he doubtless lived a life of peaceful dignity, not indeed, except in metaphor, as "a Priest, wearing the golden frontlet,"[1] but as a beloved and venerated old man whose lightest words were treasured up because he was the last of living men who could say, "I have seen the Lord."

6. The unsupported assertion of Apollonius, that he had raised a dead man to life at Ephesus,[2] may be passed over without further notice; as also may be the assertion that he was, in the Apocalyptic sense, "a virgin."[3] The expression of St. Paul in 1 Cor. ix. 5,[4]

[1] Polycr. *ap.* Euseb. iii. 31, ὃς ἐγενήθη ἱερεὺς τὸ πέταλον πεφορεκώς. Hegesippus affirms the same thing of James (*ap.* Euseb. ii. 23). Epiphanius (*Haer.* xxix. 4) appeals to the authority of Clemens in favour of this legend (ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ πέταλον ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐξῆν αὐτῷ φέρειν) (comp. *id.* lxxviii. § 13).

[2] Apollon. *ap.* Euseb. v. 18; Sozomen, vii. 26.

[3] Rev. xiv. 4 (see *Life of St. Paul*, i. 80; Tert. *De Monogam.* "Joannes . . Christi spado;" Ambrosiaster on 2 Col. xi. 2; and in the Pistis Sophia, and Apocalypse of Esdras (Fabricius, *Cod. Apocr.* II. 585).

[4] "As *the rest of* the Apostles."

at least gives some probability to the belief that all the Apostles were, like St. Peter, married men.

7. One more tradition has met with almost universal acceptance.[1] It is that when St. John "tarried at Ephesus to extreme old age, and could only with difficulty be carried to church in the arms of his disciples, and was unable to give utterance to many words, he used to say no more at their several meetings than this:—'Little children, love one another.' The disciples and fathers who were there, wearied with hearing always the same words, said, 'Master, why dost thou always say this?' 'It is the Lord's command,' was his worthy reply; 'and if only this be done, it is enough.'"[2]

8. We cannot with certainty name those with whom he was familiar during the closing epoch of his life. We only know that, according to the unanimous testimony of antiquity, Polycarp was his friend and hearer,[3] There is less certainty about Ignatius, Papias, and Quadratus.[4]

[1] Lessing has touched on this story in his *Testament des Johannes*, as Herder has told the story of the Ephesian robber in his *Der gerettete Jungling*.

[2] "Beatus Joannes Evangelista cum Ephesi moraretur usque ad extremam senectutem, et vix inter discipulorum manus ad ecclesiam deferretur, nec posset in plura vocem verba contexere, nihil aliud per singulas solebat proferre collectas, nisi hoc 'FILIOLI, DILIGITE ALTERUTRUM.' Tandem discipuli et fratres qui aderant, taedio affecti quod eadem semper audirent, dixerunt: 'Magister, quare semper hoc loqueris?' Qui respondit dignam Joanne sententiam: 'Quia praeceptum Domini est, et si solum fiat, sufficit" (Jer. *in Gal.* vi. 10).

[3] Iren. ii. 3, and *ap.* Euseb. v. 20; Euseb. iii. 36; Jer. *Chron.* A.D. 101; *de Virr. Illustr.* 17; Suidas, *s. v.*; and Tert. *de Praescr. Haer.* 32.

[4] Ignatius is said to have been a hearer of St. John, in Jer. *Chron.* A.D. 101. The question about Papias will be touched upon in Excursus XIV., about John the Presbyter. Quadratus is mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome. Prochorus and Bucolus are mentioned by later writers of no authority.

9. Respecting the death of St. John we are left in the completest darkness. Two words—ἀνεῖλε μαχαίρᾳ "slew with the sword"—suffice to record the martyrdom of his elder brother;[1] not one word tells us how the last, and in some respects the greatest, of the Apostles passed to his reward. It is only a very late and worthless rumour which says that he was killed by the Jews. From the silence of all the early Fathers as to this supposed martyrdom, we may assume it for certain that, so far as they knew, he died quietly at Ephesus in extreme old age. His grave was shown at Ephesus for several centuries, and the legend, before mentioned, that the dust was seen to move with the breathing of the great Apostle, as he lay in immortal sleep, arose from the awe with which it was regarded.[2] But the age which he attained—far surpassing, if some of our accounts are true, the ordinary three score years and ten[3]—only deepened the impression that he

[1] Acts xii. 2.

[2] See *supra*, p. 136; Polycrates, *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 31, 39; v. 24; Jer. *de Virr. Illustr.* ix.; Aug. *Tract.* 124, *in Joann.* "Assumat in argumentum quod illic terra sensim scatere et quasi ebullire perhibetur atque hoc ejus anhelitu fieri" (Niceph. *H. E.* ii. 42; Zahn, p. 205).

[3] According to Isidore Hispalensis (*De ortu et obitu*, 71), he lived to the age of eighty-nine. But if he lived till the reign of Trajan (Iren. *c. Haer.* ii. 225; Jer. *de Virr. Illustr.* ix., *adv. Jovin.* i. 14) he must have been nearly ninety-eight. The *Chronicon Paschale* says he lived one hundred years and seven months, and pseudo-Chrysostom (*de S. Johan.*) that he lived to one hundred and twenty; as also Suidas. *s. v.* Ἰωάννης, and Dorotheus (Lampe, p. 92). In the ninth century a writer named Georgius Hamartolos quotes the authority of Papias, "who had seen him," for the statement in the second book of his *Words of the Lord*, that John was "put to death by the Jews." On the other hand, (i) Polycrates (*ap.* Euseb. iii. 31, v. 20), Irenæus (*Haer.* ii. 22, § 5), and Tertullian (*de Anim.* 50) speak of his having died a natural death, which they certainly would not have done if there had been any tradition of his martyrdom; and (ii) the epithet "martyr" was only applied to him in consequence of the legends about the caldron of oil (Tert. *Praescr. Haer.* 36) and the poison

would not die till Christ returned. He did not die till Christ had returned, in that sense of the "close of the aeon" to which His own words and that of His Apostles often point; but legend said that he had been taken alive to Heaven like Enoch and Elijah,[1] and that sometimes he still wandered and appeared on earth.[2] So prevalent were such notions as to his immortality, even during his lifetime, that in the appendix to his Gospel he thought it necessary to point out the erroneous report of the words of Jesus from which they had been inferred.

cup ("Acts of John," Fabricius, *Cod. Apocr.* i. 576), as well as with reference to his banishment to Patmos (Origen, *in Matt.* xvi. 6 and *Rev.* i. 9). Keim most erroneously says (*Jesu von Nazara*, III. 44) that Herakleon, the Valentinian, quoted by Clemens of Alexandria (*Strom.* iv. 9, § 73), asserted that the only Apostles who had not suffered martyrdom were Matthew, Thomas, and Philip. But, in the first place, Herakleon added "Levi, and *many others*," of whom, therefore, John may have been one; and, secondly, he is speaking not of martyrdom at all, but of various kinds of "confession," one of which is "confession by the voice in the presence of authorities," and certainly John had made such a "confession" (Acts iv. 13, 19). Even Scholten gives up the value of this testimony and that of Georg. Hamartolos (see Wilibald Grimm in Hilgenfeld's *Zeitschr.* (1874), p. 123). How loosely Hamartolos quotes may be seen in the same passage (which was first discovered by Nolte, *Tüb. Quartalschr.* 1862, and is quoted in Hilgenfeld's *Einleit.* p. 399), from his reference to Origen, who does *not* say that St. John was *martyred* in our sense of the word, but only that he was banished to Patmos. Nor can any counter-inference be drawn from a rhetorical passage of Chrysostom, *Hom. in Matt.* lxv.

[1] Tert. *de Animâ*, 50. Obiit et Johannes, quem in adventum domini remansurum frustra fuerat spes. Ps.-Hippolyt. *de Consummat. Mundi.* Photius Myriobybl. *Cod.* 229. The notion that he revised the Canon is quite baseless, nor is it worth while to do more than mention the story of his having degraded the Presbyter who forged the Acts of Paul and Thecla (Jer. *de Virr. Illust.*; Tert. *de Baptismo*). See, for all legendary particulars about his death, Zahn, *Acta Joannis*, cvii. *sqq.*, 200 *sqq.*

[2] As in the famous legends of his appearance to Theodosius (Theodoret, *H. E.* v. 24), to Gregory Thaumaturgus (*Vit. d. Greg. Nyss.*), and to Edward the Confessor and the English pilgrims, which is represented on the screen of the Confessor's Chapel in Westminster Abbey; and of his appearance to James IV. before the battle of Flodden.

He died, as his brother had died, unnoticed and unrecorded, but he will live in his writings till the end of time, to teach and bless the world. "His body is buried in peace, but his name liveth for evermore. The people will tell of his wisdom, and the congregation will show forth his praise."[1]

[1] Ecclus. xliv. 14, 15.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE APOCALYPSE.

"Volat avis sine meta,
Quo nec vates, nec propheta
Evolavit altius.
Tam implenda quam impleta
Nunquam vidit tot secreta
Purus homo purius."—*De S. Joanne.*

MILTON has spoken of the Apocalypse as "the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies."[1] In this aspect of the book—though the notion of its dramatic form must be rejected—we may perhaps be content with the arrangement which places it as the last book of Holy Writ. But the whole weight of evidence now tends to prove that it is *not* the last book in chronological order; that it was written nearer the beginning than the end of St. John's period of apostolic activity amid the Churches of Asia;[2] that the last

[1] Reasons of Church Government.

[2] Modern criticism tends more and more to the conclusion that the Apocalypse is a genuine work of the Apostle St. John. Even Baur and Zeller regard it as one of the most certainly authenticated of the Apostolic writings. The Alogi at the close of the second century rejected it only on internal grounds, and their judgment is of no importance. Gaius (circ. 200) appears to attribute it to Cerinthus. Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 247) was inclined, on grounds of style, to assign it to some other John, but speaks of it with reverence. Eusebius wavers about it, placing it among the spurious books in one passage, and among the acknowledged books in another. Cyril of Jerusalem († 386) deliberately excludes it from the Canon. The Council of Laodicea (A.D. 381) omits it. Am-

accents of revelation which fall upon our ears are not those of a treatise which, though it ends in such perfect music, contains so many terrible visions of blood and fire, but are rather those of the Gospel which tells us that "the Word was made flesh," and of the Epistle which first formulated the most blessed truth which was ever uttered to human hearts—the truth that "God is Love."[1]

And if this conclusion be correct, it is impossible to say how much we lose—what confusion we introduce into the divine order—by neglecting the indications

philochius, in his *Jamb. ad Seleucus*, says that "most" regard it as spurious. Junilius, even in the sixth century, says that among the members of the Eastern Church it was viewed with great suspicion. Theodore of Mopsuestia († 429) never cites it. Theodoret († 457) alludes to it very slightly. It is not found in the Peshito. The Nestorian Church rejected it. It is not mentioned in the sixth century by Cosmas Indicopleustes. Nicephorus (ninth century) in his *Chronographia* omits it. Even in the fourteenth century Nicephorus Callistus, while accepting it, thinks it necessary to mention that some held it to be the work of "John the Presbyter," regarded as a different person from "John the Apostle." But, on the other hand, these adverse views are to some extent accounted for by dislike to the difficulty and obscurity of the book (*διὰ τὸ ἀσαφὲς αὐτῆς καὶ δυσάφικτον καὶ ὀλίγοις διαλαμβανόμενον καὶ νοούμενον*), and by the dangerous uses to which it was often turned (*μηδὲ συμφέρον εἶναι τοῖς πολλοῖς τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ βάθη ἐρευνᾶν*, Prol. to MS. 224). Dislike to chiliastic fanaticism, as well as obvious critical difficulties, also led to its disparagement in many quarters. The *positive* evidence in its favour is very strong. It was accepted by Papias, Justin Martyr, Dionysius of Corinth, Hermas, Melito of Sardis, Theophilus of Antioch, Apollonius, and Irenæus, the Canon of Muratori, and the Vetus Itala, in the second century; by Clemens of Alexandria and Origen in the third; by Victorinus of Pettau, Ephraem Syrus, Epiphanius, Basil, Hilary, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Didymus, and Ambrose, in the fourth. Besides this, the internal evidence, in spite of differences and difficulties, is too clear to be overlooked, and too subtle to have been forged.

[1] It is hardly worth while to mention the Apocryphal writings attributed to St. John, such as the one on the Descent from the Cross, on the Death of the Virgin Mary, &c. See Lampe, *Prolegomena* p. 131; Fabricius, *Cod. Apocr. N. T.* pt. iii. p. 200.

of chronology. Chronological sequence is always of the utmost importance for the right understanding of what a writer says. We are always liable to judge of him erroneously if we intermingle his writings, and put those messages last which he delivered first. It is impossible to say how much the difficulty in understanding the mind of St. Paul has been increased for ordinary readers by the unfortunate arrangement—an arrangement made on the most haphazard and unintelligent principles—which obliterates the lessons which would naturally spring from the right arrangement of his Epistles. It is a subject of regret that the Revisers of the Authorised Version did not render a permanent service by placing them in that sequence which is now ascertained with certainty as regards the four several groups into which they fall, and which is known with approximate certainty respecting almost every one of the separate Epistles. How is it possible for any one to enter into the real working of St. Paul's mind—the effects produced upon his thoughts by years of divine education—who is led to infer that he wrote the two Epistles to the Thessalonians *after* he had written not only those to the Romans and Galatians, but even after those to the Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians? It is to be hoped that the day will come when the obstinacy of custom will no longer prevent the correction of these conventional misplacements. But even graver misapprehensions result from the misplacement of the writings of St. John. Their present arrangement is due to suppositions, which lead to endless difficulties. It confuses the value of precious lessons, and paves the way for grievous errors. Some may think it an exaggeration to say that this closing of the

Holy Book with the Apocalypse has not been without grave consequences for the history of Christendom; but certainly it would have been better both for the Church and for the world if we had followed the divine order, and if those books had been placed last in the canon which were last in order of time. Had this been done, our Bible would have closed, as the Book of God to all intents and purposes *did* close, with the gentle and solemn warning of the last Apostle—"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

This then is the order which we here shall follow. In the Apocalypse the New Testament seems to be still speaking in the voice and in the tones of the Old Testament. In trying to see something of the meaning of the Apocalypse, we shall see the mind of St. John when he first emerged from the overshadowing influence of St. James and the Elders of Jerusalem; when, from the narrowing walls of the metropolis of Judaism, he passed forth into the Christian communities which had grown up in the heathen world. We shall see how he wrote and what he thought while under the guidance indeed of God's Holy Spirit, but before he had profited by his thirty last years of continuous education, and while yet he was but imperfectly acquainted with the language in which his greatest message was to be delivered. The Apocalypse was written before he had witnessed the Coming of Christ and the close of the Old Dispensation, in the mighty catastrophe which, by the voice of God in history, abrogated all but the moral precepts which had been uttered by the voice of God on Sinai. The moral conceptions of the Gospel transcend the symbolism of visions, and the kabbalism of numbers. We

do not pass from the purest and most etherial region of thought to dim images of plague and war, foreshadowed by fire-breathing horses and hell-born frogs. When we have grasped the abstract and absolute forms in which the Gospel and the Epistles set forth to us the eternal conflict of life with death, and light with darkness, we have learnt higher and deeper lessons than when we gaze on the material symbols of scarlet dragons and locust-horsemen, and the warring of Michael with the devil and the beast.

A few words from one of our latest and best students of the writings of St. John, though not written with this purpose, may serve to show what we lose by our customary reversal of the proper order.

"In the Apocalypse," says Canon Westcott, "the thought is of an outward coming for the open judgment of men; in the Gospel, of a judgment which is spiritual and self-executing. In the Apocalypse, the scene of the consummation is a renovated world; in the Gospel, the Father's House. In the former, the victory and the transformation are from without, by might, and the 'future' is painted in historic imagery; in the latter, the victory and the transformation are from within, by a spiritual influence, and the 'future' is present and eternal. . . . . The Apocalypse gives a view of the action of God in regard to men in a life full of sorrow, and partial defeats and cries for vengeance; the Gospel gives a view of the action of God with regard to Christ, who establishes in the heart of the believers a presence of completed joy. . . . . In a word, the study of the Synoptists, of the Apocalypse, and of the Gospel of St. John in succession, enables us to see under what

human conditions the full majesty of Christ was perceived and declared, not all at once, but step by step, and by the help of the old prophetic teaching." [1]

SECTION I.

DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

But before we enter on the difficult task of attempting to see the significance of the Apocalypse, we must once more pause to cast a glance over the condition of the world at the time when it was written.

The chief obstacle to the acceptance of the true date of the Apocalypse, arises from the authority of Irenæus. Speaking of the number of the Beast, and repeating those early conjectures which, as I shall show elsewhere, practically agree with what is now known to be the true solution, he remarks that he cannot give any positive decision since he believes that, if such a solution had been regarded as necessary, it would have been furnished by "him who saw the Apocalypse. For it is not so long ago that *it* (the Apocalypse) was seen, but almost in our generation, towards the close of the reign of Domitian." Three attempts have been made to get rid of this evidence. Guericke proposes to take "*Dometianou*" as an adjective, and to render the clause "near the close of the Domitian rule," *i.e.*, the rule of *Domitius Nero*.[2] But the absence of the article on which he relies gives no support to his view, and no scholar will accept this hypothesis, though he may admit the possibility of some *confusion* between the names Domitius and

[1] Introd., pp. lxxxv—lxxxvii.

[2] Guerike, *Einleit. ins N. Test.* p. 285.

Domitian.[1] Others again make the word ἑωράθη mean "*he, i.e.*, St. John, was seen," since no nominative is expressed. Now Irenæus, in the same passage and elsewhere, dwells so much on the fact of testimony given by those who had *seen* John face to face, that we cannot set aside this suggestion as impossible.[2] It has the high authority of Wetstein. Again, the Latin translator of Irenæus renders the verb not "*visa est*," "the Apocalypse was seen," but "*visum est*," "the Beast (τὸ θήριον) was seen." The language is, unfortunately, ambiguous, and as, in uncritical times, it would naturally be understood in what appears to be the most obvious sense, it is not surprising that St. Jerome follows the supposed authority of Irenæus in dating the Apocalypse from the later epoch. Eusebius says that St. John was banished to Patmos in the reign of Domitian, but, even if he be not misunderstanding the meaning of Irenæus, his evidence goes for little, since he leant to the view that the Apocalypse was written by John the Presbyter, and not by the Apostle. But the authority of Irenæus was not regarded as decisive, even if his meaning be undisputed. Tertullian places the banishment to Patmos immediately after the deliverance from the cauldron of boiling oil, and Jerome says that this took place in the reign of Nero.[3] Epiphanius says that St. John was banished in the reign of Claudius, and the earliest Apocalyptic commentators, as well as the Syriac and Theophylact, all place the writing of the Apocalypse in the reign of Nero. To

[1] This is the view of Niermeyer.

[2] μαρτυρούντων ἐκείνων τῶν κατ' ὄψιν Ἰωάννην ἑωρακότων (Iren. *ad Haer.* v. 30).

[3] Tert. *De Praescr.* 36, Jer. *c. Jovin.* i. 26.

these must be added the author of the "Life of Timotheus," of which extracts are preserved by Photius. Clemens of Alexandria and Origen only say that "John was banished by the tyrant," and this on Christian lips may mean Nero much more naturally than Domitian.[1] Moreover, if we accept erroneous tradition or inference from the ambiguous expressions of Irenæus, we are landed in insuperable difficulties. By the time that Domitian died, St. John was, according to all testimony, so old and so infirm that even if there were no other obstacles in the way, it is impossible to conceive of him as writing the fiery pages of the Apocalypse. Irenæus may have been misinterpreted; but even if not, he might have made a "slip of memory," and confused Domitian with Nero. I myself, in talking to an eminent statesman, have heard him make a chronological mistake of some years, even in describing events in which he took one of the most prominent parts. We cannot accept a dubious expression of the Bishop of Lyons as adequate to set aside an overwhelming weight of evidence, alike external and internal, in proof of the fact that the Apocalypse was written, at the latest, soon after the death of Nero.[2]

For the sole key to the Apocalypse, as to every book which has any truth or greatness in it, lies in the heart of the writer; and the heart of every writer must be intensely influenced by the spirit or the cir-

[1] See Epiphan. *Haer.* li. 12 and 33; Andreas on Rev. vi. 12; Arethas on Rev. vii. 1—8; Syriac MS. No. 18; Theophylact. *Comment. in Joann.*

[2] This result is now accepted, not only by Lücke, Schwegler, Baur, Züllig, De Wette, Renan, Krenkel, Bleek, Reuss, Réville, Volkmar, Bunsen, Düsterdieck, &c., but also by such writers as Stier, Neander, Guericke, Auberlen, F. D. Maurice, Moses Stuart, Niermeyer, Desprez, S. Davidson, the author of *The Parousia*, Aubé, &c.

cumstances of the times in which he writes. His words are addressed in the first instance to his living contemporaries, and it is only through them that he can hope to reach posterity. Now, if there was ever any book which bears upon every page the impress of reality—the proof that it is written in words which came fresh and burning from the heart, and passed fresh and burning into the hearts of others—that book is the Apocalypse. "Without tears," says Bengel, "it was not written; without tears it cannot be understood." It comes to us with tenfold force when we remember the tumult of emotions with which the small and persecuted communities of early Christians found themselves in direct antagonism to the Roman Empire, as well as to the Jewish religion. Could any powers more venerated and more portentous than these be ever banded together to crush a nascent faith? The Apocalypse is not in the least a book of dim abstractions, of fantastic enigmas, of monstrous symbols. It had a very definite object, and a very intelligible meaning for all who had been trained in familiarity with the strange form of literature to which it belongs. The single phrase of Tertullian—"Sub Nerone damnatio invaluit"—goes far towards giving us a clue to the meaning of the Apostle. John writes as a Christian prophet would be likely to write who may have seen a Peter crucified and a Paul beheaded.[1] The book is a rallying cry to the Christian warriors who might seem liable to be trampled to the earth in irremediable defeat.

[1] The remarkable expression, "And I saw the souls of them that had been *beheaded* (πεπελεκισμένων) for the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. xx. 4), may (as Ewald thinks, *Gesch.* vi. 618) point especially to the death of St. Paul. "Beheading" was the form of death adopted for Roman citizens.

The book has been persistently misunderstood. Herder might well ask, "Was there a key sent with the book, and has this been lost? Was it thrown into the Sea of Patmos, or into the Maeander?" Intolerance, ignorance, sectarian fierceness, the sanguinary factiousness of an irreligious religionism, the eternal Pharisaism of the human heart, have made of it their favourite camping-ground. Others have been driven into a natural but irreverent scorn of it, because they turn with disgust from the degradation to which it has been subjected by fanatical bigotry. But when rightly used, it is full of blessed instruction, and it would never have been discredited as it has been, if its own repeated assertions and indications had not been ignored. Instead of seeking out the meanings which must have made it precious to its original readers, as, in great part at least, to all loving and humble Christian hearts, men have wandered into the quagmire of private interpretations after the *ignis fatuus* of religious hatred. God has revealed himself in the history of the Church and the World, but this manifestation of God in history has been hopelessly confused by an attempt to make it correspond with symbols with which it has no connexion. The surest and deadliest injury to which the Apocalypse can be subjected is to treat it as a sort of anticipated Gibbon, or a controversial compendium of ecclesiastical disputes. Its symbols have become plastic in the hot hands of party factiousness, but under such manipulations they have been rendered unintelligible to the eyes of truth and love.

Happily these "theological romances"[1] of Apoca-

[1] Moses Stuart.

lyptic commentary have had their day. Like a thousand other phantoms of exegesis, they are vanishing into the limbo of the obsolete. They may linger on for a time, like spectres not yet exorcised, but they are doomed to disappear for ever in the broadening light of a sounder knowledge.

The Apocalypse had its immediate origin in two events which happened at this period of the life of St. John. One was the Neronian persecution. The other was the outbreak of the Jewish war. It was not until these events were over, it was not until their divine teaching had done its work, that a third and more gradual event—the development of Gnostic teaching in the form of new Christologies—called forth in its turn the Gospel and the Epistles of St. John as the final utterance of Christian revelation.

Unless we study these events there is no chance of our understanding the writings of St. John. Those writings, like all the Books of Scripture, are indeed full of sacred lessons for every humble heart. The comprehension of such lessons—which, after all, are the best and deepest—requires nothing but the spiritual enlightenment of a pure and truthful soul. But the historical and critical knowledge of a book demands other qualifications; and it has been a fatal mistake of Christians to claim infallibility for their subjective convictions, not only in matters of religious experience, but in questions of history and criticism, respecting which they may be quite incompetent to pronounce an opinion of any value.

We have already seen what manner of man Nero was. The spectacle of such a man seated on the Im-

perial throne of the heathen world accounts for the abhorrence which he inspired as a living impersonation of the "world-rulers of this darkness."[1] We have also seen the origin and history of the Neronian persecution, and the circumstances which connected it with the burning of Rome. For the history of these events we must refer back to the first volume. But we must remind the reader that the Apocalypse of St. John can only be rightly read by the lurid light which falls upon it from the Burning City—under the horrible illumination flung by the bale-fires of martyrdom upon the palace and gardens of the Beast from the abyss.

A great French artist has painted a picture of Nero walking with his lictors through the blackened streets of Rome after the conflagration. He represents him as he was in mature age, in the uncinctured robe with which, to the indignation of the noble Romans, he used to appear in public. He is obese with self-indulgence. Upon his coarsened features rests that dark cloud, which they must have often worn when his conscience was most tormented by the furies of his murdered mother and his murdered wives. Shrinking back among the ruins are two poor Christian slaves, who watch him with looks in which disgust and detestation struggle with fear. The picture puts into visible form the feelings of horror with which the brethren must have regarded one whom they came to consider as the incarnate instrument of Satanic antagonism against God and against His Christ,—as the deadliest and most irresistible enemy of all that is called holy or that is worshipped.

[1] Eph. vi. 12.

Did St. John ever see that frightful spectacle of a monster in human flesh? Was he a witness of the scenes which made the circus and the gardens of Nero reek with the fumes of martyrdom? We have already observed that tradition points in that direction. In the silence which falls over many years of his biography, it is possible that he may have been compelled by the Christians to retire from the menace of the storm before it actually burst over their devoted heads. St. Paul, as we believe, was providentially set free from his Roman imprisonment just in time to be preserved from the first outburst of the Neronian persecution.[1] Had it not been for this, who can tell whether St. Paul and St. John and St. Peter might not have been clothed in the skins of wild beasts to be torn to pieces by the bloodhounds of the amphitheatre? or have stood, each in his pitchy tunic, to form one of those ghastly human torches which flared upon the dark masses of the abominable crowd? But even if St. John never saw Rome at this period, many a terrified fugitive of the "vast multitude" which Tacitus mentions must have brought him tidings about those bloodstained orgies in which the Devil, the Beast, and the False Prophet—"that great Anti-Trinity of Hell" — were wallowing through the mystic Babylon in the blood of the martyrs of the Lord.

Supposing that St. John had written an apocalyptic book at this time, is it not *à priori* certain that these events, and the appalling figure of the Antichrist who then filled the world's eye, would have been prominent in such a book? Do not contemporary events and

[1] See my *Life of St. Paul*, ii. 604—607.

contemporary persecutions figure in every one of the numerous Apocalypses in which Jews and Christians at this epoch expressed their hopes and fears? Is it not a matter of certainty to every reasonable man, that the Apocalypse must be interpreted by laws similar to those which regulate every other specimen of that Semitic form of literature to which it avowedly belongs? Does not the fact that the anticipated Antichrist of Daniel is the persecutor Antiochus Epiphanes, make it in the highest degree probable that the incarnate Antichrist of St. John is the persecutor Nero?

The Neronian persecution, then, was one of the two events which awoke in Christian hearts those thundering echoes of which the Apocalypse of St. John is the prolonged and perpetuated reverberation. The other event was the outbreak of the Jewish war and the siege of Jerusalem. If we succeed in fixing the date of the Apocalypse, we shall be able to know what was the exact condition of the Empire and of the Holy Land, of Judaism, Heathendom, and Christianity—of the world and of the Church of Christ—when St. John saw and wrote.

But while the date may be fixed with much probability, it cannot be fixed with certainty. All that can be asserted is that the book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the burning of the Temple. This is clear from the beginning of the eleventh chapter. The Temple is there spoken of as still standing, in language which closely resembles, and indeed directly refers to, the language of our Lord in his great Eschatological discourse. Such language, and the whole sequel of it, would have been unreal and misleading, if, at the time when it was penned, nothing

remained of the Temple and city of Jerusalem but heaps of bloodstained stones. But though Jerusalem was not yet taken, there are signs that the armies had already gathered for her anticipated destruction, and that the whole length of the land had been deluged and drenched with the blood of its sons. We cannot tell the exact year in which the Christians—warned, as Eusebius says, "by a certain oracle given to their leaders by revelation;"[1] or, as Epiphanius tells us, "by an angel"[2]—left the doomed and murderous city and took refuge across the Jordan, in the Peræan town of Pella.[3] There can be little doubt that their flight took place before the actual blockade of Jerusalem by Titus, and probably in A.D. 68. It seems to be alluded to in Rev. xii. 14. Now the first threatening commotions in Judæa began in A.D. 64, shortly after the fire of Rome. The actual revolt burst forth at Cæsarea in A.D. 65. Vespasian was despatched to Judæa by Nero during his visit to Greece in A.D. 66. He arrived in Palestine early in A.D. 67. The years

[1] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 5 (κατά τινα χρησμὸν κ.τ.λ.). Probably the leading Presbyters of the Church pointed out that the signs of the times indicated by our Lord, as He sat two days before His death on the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxiv. 15, *seq.*), now clearly required obedience to His warning.

[2] Epiphan. *De Mensuris*, 15. In *Haer.* xxix. 7, he refers directly to the command of Christ. Jerusalem might be said to be "circled with armies" (Luke xxi. 20), long before its actual circumvallation by Titus.

[3] Which might well be described as in "the mountains." Pella is in a lofty position, and is on one side surrounded by precipices. It was the nearest city to Jerusalem which was at once safe and neutral. Though a free city, it had placed itself more or less under the protection of Agrippa II., and by so doing had severed its fortunes from those of the Jews. By their flight to this town, the Jewish Christians cast in their lot with the opponents of Jewish fanaticism. It was one of the steps in that Divine education which showed them that the days of Mosaism and of the synagogue were past.

67 and 68 were spent in suppressing the brave resistance of Galilee and Peræa. Nero died in June, 68. Political uncertainties caused a suspension of the Roman measures during the year 69, but when Vespasian felt himself secure of the throne, in A.D. 70, he sent Titus to besiege Jerusalem. The siege began early in March, 70, and was brought to its terrible conclusion in August of the same year.

But there are two passages, Rev. xiii. 3, and xvii. 10, 11, which might seem to give us the very year in which the book was written. The former tells us about the Wild Beast, and how "one of his heads was smitten to death and his deathstroke was healed;" the other, explaining the previous symbols, tells us that the seven heads of the Beast "are *seven kings;* the five are fallen; *the one is;* the other is not yet come." Now we shall see hereafter, with perfect certainty, that the Wild Beast, and the wounded head of the Wild Beast, are interchangeable symbols for Nero. The five "kings" then can be no other than Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, and Nero. The reckoning of the "kings"[1] from Augustus is the natural reckoning, and is the one adopted by Tacitus. If Suetonius begins his Twelve Cæsars with the life of Julius, the greatest of them all, the reason is that he wishes to give an account of the Cæsarean family, and of the *hero eponymus* who raised them to the summit of earthly power.[2] So far then it might be regarded as certain that Galba is the sixth emperor, and therefore that the

[1] "Kings" was a common title for the Roman Emperors in the Eastern provinces (see Ewald, *Gesch.* vi. 604, *seqq.*).

[2] "*Imperator*" was a title which Julius Cæsar bore, in common with Cicero and other private persons. He never was "Princeps." The last private Imperator was Junius Blaesus, in the reign of Tiberius.

Apocalypse was written between June, 68, when Nero committed suicide, and January, 69, when Galba was murdered. And since the news of Galba's successful rebellion could not have been known without a little delay, we might fix the date of the Vision in the summer or autumn of A.D. 68.

This is, indeed, the all but certain date of the book. We have already seen reason to set aside the notion of its having been written in the reign of Domitian, as due partly to the mistake of Irenæus,[1] and partly to idle repetition and idle inference. It is not, however, *impossible* that Vespasian and not Galba may have been regarded by the Apostle, no less than by others, as having been in reality the sixth emperor. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius passed like phantoms across the imperial stage. The Sibyllist dismisses them in the single line—"After him three kings shall be destroyed by one another."[2] They neither belonged to the old imperial family, nor did they found a new one. Between them they barely covered the space of a year and a half. It is true that they are spoken of as "Cæsars" both by Tacitus and Suetonius, though Vitellius refused the name. But when Vespasian succeeded the murdered Vitellius, at the end of A.D. 69, it was believed that the Flavian dynasty would be secure and lasting, and the fashion arose of regarding the reigns of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius as a mere "*rebellion of three military chiefs.*"[3] If this

[1] The Commentary of Andreas, Bp. of the Cappadocian Cæsarea, in the fifth century, rightly says, in contradiction of Irenæus, that it was supposed to have been written before A.D. 70.

[2] *Orac. Sib.* v. 35.

[3] The language of Suetonius is very remarkable, and certainly lends

were the view of the seer, the date of the Apocalypse would be brought down to A.D. 70. The earlier date accords better with his own indications.

The tension of feeling caused by the tremendous conflict of the Antichrist against the Saints must have been still further strained by the imminent destruction which seemed to threaten the existence of the Jewish race. To minds already glowing with expectations of the Coming of Christ, and the close of the ages, the signs of the times must have worn a portentous aspect. The sunset sky of the ancient dispensation was red and lowering with the prophecy of storm. The "woes of the Messiah"—the travail throes of the Future Age—the pangs which were to accompany the new birth of the Messianic kingdom—were already shaking the world.[1] There were wars and rumours of wars. There were famines and earthquakes. The Church had barely passed through the anguish of the great tribulation. Christians had realised what a tremendous thing it was to be "hated of all men," and to be treated as the offscourings of the world. Hundreds of martyrs had been baptized in blood. The name of "Christian" was regarded as the synonym of malefactor; and all the world hated Christians, on the false charge that Christians hated all the world. Many were faltering in the faith; many had

some sanction to the views of those who regard Vespasian as the sixth Emperor. He says, "*Rebellione trium principum* et cæde *incertum diu et quasi vagum Imperium* suscepit firmavitque tandem gens Flavia" (*Vesp.* 1).

[1] This is the term used not only by the Rabbis, but also by the Evangelists, ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων (Matt. xxiv. 8; Mark xiii. 8). It is a rendering of the Hebrew *Chebelî hammeshîach.* (See Hos. xiii. 14; Isa. xxxvii. 3; Mic. iv. 9, v. 2, &c.)

proved false to it. Even within its sacred fold many regarded each other with suspicion and hatred. There were false Christs and false Prophets. The powers of heaven were being shaken. Suns and moons and stars—from Roman Emperors down to Jewish Priests — were one after another waxing dim, and shooting from their spheres. Clearly the day must be at hand of which the Lord had said that it would come *ere that generation passed away*, and that all the things of which He had spoken would be fulfilled. Men were not expecting it. They were eating and drinking, as in the days of Noah, marrying and giving in marriage, drinking with the drunken, and beating their fellow servants in all the security of greed, in all the insolence of oppression. But, none the less were the powers of vengeance nursing the impatient earthquake, and a belief in the eternal laws of morality was alone sufficient to make every Christian feel that the fiat had gone forth—

> "ROME SHALL PERISH! write that word
> In the blood that she hath spilt:
> Perish hopeless and abhorred,
> Deep in ruin as in guilt."

The fields were white for the harvest, the grapes were purple for the vintage of the world. The carcases of a corrupt Judaism and a yet corrupter heathendom seemed already to be falling in the wilderness; and on the distant horizon were visible the dark specks which the seer knew to be the gathering vultures of retribution, which should soon fill the air with "the rushing of their congregated wings."

SECTION II.

THE REVOLT OF JUDÆA.

"Conquest, thy fiery wing their race pursued,
Thy thirsty poniard blushed with infant blood."

HEBER.

On the whole the Jews had borne with reasonable patience, for nearly a hundred years, the odious yoke of the Herods and the Romans. The volcano of their fanaticism was, indeed, only slumbering; and every now and then such events as the rebellion of Judas of Galilee, or the bold teaching of the Pharisee Matthias Ben Margaloth, or some turbulent movement of the Zealots, or some secret assassination by the Sicarii, proved to the Procurators that it was not extinct. The affair of the Standards, and of the Gilt Votive Shields, and of the Corban Money, under the rule of Pilate—the fierce persistency with which the Jews braved death by the sword or by famine, rather than admit the desecration of their Temple by the Colossus of Caligula—showed the Romans that they were walking over hot lava and recent ashes. The rise of false Messiahs under Fadus, the seditious movements in Samaria under Cumanus, the spread of brigandage under Felix, the establishment of a sort of *vehmgericht*, which carried out by murder its secret decrees, the quarrels between Agrippa and the Jews under Festus about the wall of his palace, the avarice of Albinus (A.D. 63), and the manner in which he allowed the disgraceful factions of rivals in the High Priesthood to assail each other unchecked, all tended to precipitate the end. But though the Jews and the Romans felt for each other a profound hatred, there was

no overt rebellion till the days of Gessius Florus, who was appointed Procurator in A.D. 65. Under the best of circumstances the administrative customs of the Romans were odious to the Jews, and although the Romans were anxious to extend to them the utmost limits of a contemptuous tolerance, yet they looked upon the conduct of the Jews as so unreasonable, so fanatical, so unworthy of ordinary human beings, that they were in a state of perpetual exasperation. The Jews, in return, regarded the Romans as the impersonation of brutal violence, infamous atheism, and impure greed. In the Talmud, and in the Books of Esdras and Enoch, we see how they loathed their political rulers. The arrogance of Jewish exclusiveness constantly betrayed itself in language which showed that they regarded Gentiles as worthless,[1] and even Proselytes as little better than a blotch on the health of Israel.[2] On the other hand, Tacitus shows us how a grave Gentile historian could describe the Jews as no people at all, but the mere scum and offscouring of peoples, the descendants of a horde of leprous slaves, devoted to execrable superstitions, degraded by ass-worship, and animated by phrenetic hatred of all nations except themselves. The mutual aversion of Semites and Aryans thus finds ample illustration in the literature of both.

Between such elements there could be no deep or lasting peace, least of all when the Jews were so seeth-

[1] *Bava Kama*, f. 113, *b*; *Sanhedrin*, f. 59, *a*; *Sopherim*, 15; *Rosh Hashanah*, f. 23, *a*. These, and other similar passages, may be seen translated in Dr. McCaul's *Old Paths*, Hershon's *Treasures of the Talmud*, &c.

[2] "The following three are attached to each other—proselytes, slaves, and ravens" (*Pesachim*, f. 113, *b*). Rabbi Chelbo said, "Proselytes are as injurious to Israel as the scab" (see my *Life of St. Paul*, i. 666).

ing with Messianic expectations that even the Gentiles had come to believe that some one from the East was to be Master of the World. The Romans afterwards explained this prophecy as applicable to Vespasian; but Suetonius tells us that the Jewish revolt was due to their understanding it in a Messianic sense.[1] The air, too, was full of prodigies. A great writer has said that the most terrible convulsions of nature have often synchronised with the political catastrophes.[2] However this may be, it is certain that events are often influenced by the effect produced on the imagination by strange portents or uncommon appearances. The tension of men's minds among the heathen made them notice or imagine all sorts of prodigious births, storms, inundations, comets, showers of blood, earthquakes, strange effects of lightning, abnormal growths of trees, streams of meteorites.[3] In Jerusalem men told how, at the Passover of A.D. 65, a mysterious light had gleamed for three hours at midnight in the Holiest Place; how the enormous gates of brass, which it required the exertions of twenty men to move, had opened of themselves, and could not be closed; how, at Pentecost, the priests had heard sounds as of departing deities, who said to each other, "Let us depart hence;"[4] how

> "Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds,
> In rank and squadron, and right form of war,
> Which drizzled blood."

[1] Suet. *Vesp.* 4. "Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus et constans opinio esse in fatis ut *eo tempore* Judeâ profecti rerum potirentur. Judaei ad se trahentes rebellarunt" (Jos. *B. J.* vi. 5, § 4; Tac. *Hist.* v. 13).

[2] Niebuhr. [3] Suet. *Vesp.* 5.

[4] Jos. *B. J.* ii. 22, § 1; vi. 5, § 21; Tac. *H.* v. 13, and in the Talmud.

"Every one," says Renan, "dreamed of presages; the apocalyptic colour of the Jewish imagination tinged everything with an aureole of blood."

It seems to have been the wicked object of Gessius Florus—the last of the Procurators of Judæa—to bring these elements of rebellion to a head.[1] Though he owed his appointment to the friendship of his wife, Cleopatra, with Poppæa, who, if not a proselyte, was very favourable to the Jews, it seems as if he took every step with the intention of escaping from legal enquiries into his own administration, by maddening the Jews into acts which the Romans would regard as irreparably criminal. The legions of Palestine were not purely Roman. They were recruited from the dregs of the provincials, especially from the Syrians of Cæsarea and the Samaritans of Sebaste, two places in which the Jews were regarded with special antipathy.[2] At Cæsarea the population was half Jewish, half Greek and Syrian. Nothing but the Roman authority prevented these hostile nationalities from flying at each other's throats. In A.D. 66 Nero settled their rivalries by giving the precedence to the Greeks and Syrians. A Greek immediately built a wall so close to the Jewish synagogue that the Jews had hardly room to pass. The young Jews assaulted the workmen, and John, a Jewish publican, gave Florus the immense bribe of eight talents to prohibit the continuance of the building. Florus accepted the money, and, without taking any step, went to Sebaste. The

[1] "Duravit tamen patientia Judaeis usque ad Gess. Florum .... sub eo bellum ortum" (Tac. *H.* v. 10).

[2] "Ekron shall be rooted up" (Zeph. ii. 4). "This is Cæsarea, the daughter of Edom (Rome)" (*Megillah*, f. 6, *a*).

next day, being the Sabbath, some worthless Greek, in order to insult the Jews, turned up an earthen pot near the door of the synagogue, and began to sacrifice birds upon the bottom of it. This was intended to be a parody on Lev. xiv. 4, 5, and therefore an allusion to the old calumny that the Jews were a nation of lepers.[1] The Jews flew to arms, and since the Roman Master of the Horse could not quell the tumult, they carried off their sacred books to Narbata. When John and twelve of the leading Jews went to Sebaste to complain to Florus, he threw them into prison. As though this was not enough, he sent to Jerusalem, and demanded seventeen talents from the Corban treasury for the use of the Emperor. This was more than the Jews could tolerate. They not only refused the demand, but heaped reproaches upon the Procurator. He set out for Jerusalem, with a body of horse and foot, to enforce his requisition; and when the people came forth to pay him the customary compliment of receiving him with a shout of joy, he ordered his cavalry to drive them back into the city. Next day, with outrageous insolence, he refused every apology which was offered him, demanded the surrender of those who had reproached him, and scourged and crucified some of the Jewish publicans, though they held the rank of Roman knights. In these disturbances 3,600 Jews were slain. Even then the chief citizens tried to calm the people, and to hush the voice of their natural lamentations. But Florus now bade them all go out and welcome with a shout of joy two cohorts which were advancing from Cæsarea. To these cohorts he had given the brutal order not to return

[1] See Jos. *c. Apion.* i. 25; Tac. *H.* v. 4.

the shout, and to fall on the Jews, sword in hand, if they showed any signs of dissatisfaction. A tumult naturally arose, and many of the defenceless Jews were massacred or crushed to death. Next day the people were in open revolt. They drove back Florus from the Temple into Antonia, and demolished the covered way, down which it had been the custom of the Roman soldiers to rush when any disturbance arose in the Temple. After these acts pardon was impossible, and Florus, having effected his infamous purpose, retired to Cæsarea, leaving only a single cohort in the Castle of Antonia.

The principal Jews, with the Queen Berenice, then went to complain of Florus to Cestius Gallus, the Legate of Syria. He sent Neapolitanus and Agrippa to Jerusalem to make enquiries, and Agrippa sincerely tried to save the people from rebellion. They were willing to make every concession except that of continuing to obey Florus. When Agrippa urged them to do this, they pelted him with stones, and drove him from the city.

The revolt continued. Though occasioned by the tyranny of Florus, it was inspired by Messianic hopes.[1] The strong fortress of Masada was seized by the Zealots,[2] and the Roman garrison was put to the sword. Eleazar, captain of the Temple, refused to permit any sacrifices for the Emperor. The loyal party, aided by

[1] Jos. *B. J.* vi. 5, § 4. Josephus and Tacitus are almost our sole authorities for the history of the revolt. Grätz (*Gesch. d. Juden.* iii. 331—414) and Derenbourg (*Hist. de Tal.* 255—302) add a few particulars gleaned from the Talmud.

[2] The Zealots (*Kannaîm*) were the fiercest and most unscrupulously reckless of the national party. They were chiefly Galilæans. Simon the Apostle was a *Kananite—i.e.*, a Zealot.

3,000 Batanean horsemen, sent them by Agrippa, could only command the upper city, and this was stormed after a few days by the Zealots and Sicarii, who burnt the palaces of Agrippa, Berenice, and the High Priest Ananias. Two days after—on July 5, A.D. 66—they took the tower of Antonia, and though they had sworn to let the Roman garrison depart, they massacred the whole cohort with the exception of their head centurion, Metilius, who basely purchased his life by accepting circumcision. The High Priest Ananias was dragged out of his place of concealment, a sewer of the Asmonæan Palace, and was murdered. By the end of September, 66, Jerusalem was in the hands of the rebels. The Romans in the strong fortress of Machærus capitulated. Cypros was taken. In five months the whole of Palestine—Judæa, Peræa, Galilee, and even Idumæa—was in open rebellion against the Roman Empire.

Then began that internecine war of races—that horrible "epidemic of massacre"—which is unparalleled in the whole of history. The rebellion failed chiefly because of the hatred with which the Jews had inspired the Syrians. In Cæsarea the Greeks and Syrians attacked the Jews, and massacred them to the number of 20,000; while Florus seized the few that had escaped and sent them to the galleys. The Jews avenged themselves by massacring the Syrians in Philadelphia, Heshbon, Gerasa, Pella, Scythopolis, and other towns; and by laying waste with sword and fire every city and village which they could seize in Decapolis, Gaulonitis, Samaria, and the maritime plain. The Syrians took fearful reprisals at Ascalon, Ptolemais, Tyre, Hippo, and Gadara. The madness

spread even to Alexandria. The Præfect at that time was the apostate Jew, Tiberius Alexander, a nephew of Philo. The quarrel broke out when the population were assembled in the huge wooden amphitheatre. Insulted by the Greeks, the Jews hurled stones at their adversaries, and seized torches to set fire to the amphitheatre, and involve the whole population in destruction. Unable to stop them in any other way, Tiberius let loose 17,000 soldiers upon them, and 50,000 Jews were slain. Before the year was ended there was another horrible plot of massacre at Damascus, and 10,000 Jews, unarmed and defenceless, were shamefully butchered by their fellow citizens. Early in the next year, the streets of Antioch also were deluged with Jewish blood.

Cestius Gallus now marched southward with Agrippa, at the head of a considerable force, to quell the rebellion. Conflagration and massacre marked his path. Zabulon, Joppa, Narbatene, Mount Asamon, Lydda, were the scenes of various tragedies. In October he arrived at Gibeon. Though it was the Sabbath, the Jews, with whom intense zeal supplied the place of skill and discipline, rushed to encounter him, and killed 515 men, with the loss of only twenty-two on their own side, while the rear of the Romans was harassed by Simon Bar Giora. Of the ambassadors sent by Agrippa to appeal to the Jews, one was killed, the other wounded. All hope of peace being now at an end, on October 30, Cestius advanced to Scopus, at the north of Jerusalem, seized Bezetha, fired the timber market, and drove the rebels within the second wall. If he had shown the least courage and resolution, he might now without difficulty have taken the city by

assault, and ended the war, for large numbers of the peaceful citizens were ready to open the gates to him. His irresolution and cowardice frustrated their plans. Even when he was on the verge of success he so unaccountably sounded a retreat, that the Zealots, in a fury of reviving hope, chased him first to Scopus, thence to Gibeon, and finally inflicted upon him a desperate defeat at the famous path of Bethhoron, over which, in old days, Joshua had uplifted his spear to bid the sun "stand still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon." Cestius left 5,300 footmen and 380 horsemen dead upon the field, lost an eagle, and, flying to Antipatris, left behind him the military engines which the Jews afterwards turned to such good account against the besiegers of Jerusalem. The sheep, as in the Book of Enoch, were now armed to do battle against the wolves. The Legate died soon after, weary of a life which had suffered so severe a shame.

The defeat of Cestius took place in November, 66. When the news of it reached Nero in Greece, even the supreme folly and disgrace of his daily proceedings did not prevent him from realising the gravity of the crisis. He saw that an able general was necessary to recover the country, which he had been taught by soothsayers to regard as his future Empire.[1] He had such a general in Vespasian, whose humble origin and plebeian surroundings secured him from jealousy. Vespasian was then in disgrace, for having gone to sleep or yawned while Nero was singing. When the messenger came to announce his elevation to the post

[1] Suet. (*Ner.* 40): "Spoponderant tamen quidam destituto ei ordinationem Orientis, nonnulli nominatim *regnum Hierosolymorum.*"

of commander-in-chief of the Judæan legions, Vespasian thought that he was the bearer of a death-warrant from the imperial buffoon. But accepting the proffered command, he at once took vigorous measures, and was ably seconded by Titus, his son.

Meanwhile—though it was clear from the first that the revolt was foredoomed to defeat, and that the rebels would drag nation and city and Temple to destruction—even serious citizens were swept away by the tide of frenzied enthusiasm. They may have thought that the only way to control the revolt was to range themselves at the head of it. The city was placed under the younger Hanan and Joseph Ben Gorion. The country was divided into military districts. Gamala and Galilee were assigned to the protection of the historian Josephus.

It was on him, and the forces under his command, that the first shock of battle fell. Vespasian had formed the plan of conquering the country in detail, and of driving the defeated population southwards in disorderly masses towards Jerusalem, where he hoped that famine would expedite the work of war. He started from Antioch in March, A.D. 67. Then once more began the bath of blood for the hapless race. Josephus, though he displayed both genius and courage, and was the nominal general of "more than 100,000 young men,[1]" was hindered by want of cavalry, and hampered by the rashness, treachery, and opposition of followers, from whom his very life was often in danger. Gadara was the first city to fall. There, as well as in

[1] So he says (*B. J.* ii. 20, § 6); but perhaps his numbers would bear dividing by ten *at least*, and his items (*id.* § 8) seem only to amount to 65,350

the surrounding villages, men, women, and children were indiscriminately slain. For forty-six days Josephus defended Jotapata. On the forty-seventh it was betrayed. Forty thousand Jews had fallen in the siege; 1,200 were made prisoners; the city was committed to the flames. At Ascalon 10,000 Jews were slaughtered. At Japha 27,000 were killed, and the women and children were sold into slavery. On Mount Gerizim many Samaritans perished of thirst, and 11,600 fell before the soldiers of Celearis. At Joppa, 8,400 had been slain by Cestius and the city burnt. But a number of fugitives had ensconced themselves in the ruins, and were living by piracy and brigandage. These Jews fled to their ships before the advance of the Roman soldiers. Next morning a storm burst on them, and, after a frightful scene of despair, 4,200 were drowned, and their corpses were washed upon the shore. Taricheæ was a strongly-fortified city on the shores of Lake Tiberias. It was taken by Titus, and 6,000 Jews dyed with their blood the waters of that crystal sea. Titus had promised safety to the inhabitants, but in spite of this 2,200 of the aged and the young were massacred in the Gymnasium; 6,000 of the strongest were sent to Nero to dig through the Isthmus of Corinth; and 30,400 citizens of this and neighbouring cities, including some whom Vespasian had given to Agrippa, were sold as slaves.

After this dreadful experience, nearly the whole district submitted to the conqueror. Gamala, however, still resisted. It was deemed impregnable by its citizens, since it was built at the top of a mountain, accessible only by one path, which was intersected by a deep ditch. Agrippa besieged it for seven months in vain. Then Vespasian invested it. Pressed by

hunger, of which many died, some of the citizens climbed down the precipice, or escaped through the sewers. At last, aided by a storm, the Romans took it on October 23, A.D. 67. Once more there was a fearful slaughter. Two women alone escaped; 4,000 were slain in the defence; 5,000 flung themselves down the precipices; all the rest—even the women and children—were cut to pieces or thrown down the rocks.

Mount Tabor, which Josephus had fortified, still held out. Placidus drew away some of its defenders by a feigned flight, and the rest were driven to surrender from want of water. We are not informed of the number of the slain.

Giscala, the native city of the Zealot John, was the last to succumb. John fled from it with his adherents, and in the pursuit of them by the troops of Titus, 6,000 women and children were slain.

After this the Roman generals led their troops into winter quarters, postponing the siege of Jerusalem till the following year. But this respite brought no peace to the miserable and polluted city. John of Giscala, escaping to Jerusalem, excused his flight by saying that it was not worth while to defend other cities so long as the Jews possessed such a stronghold as Jerusalem, which the Romans, unless they made themselves wings, could never reach. By such boastings he fired the audacity of the young and the fanatical. Brigandage increased on all sides, and the Zealots were guilty of such atrocities that many preferred to throw themselves on the mercy of the Romans. By night and by day, openly and in secret, murder, pillage, and every form of crime raged in the Holy City. The

rich and noble were seized in multitudes on the false charge of treachery, and were put to death, partly to get rid of their authority, partly to plunder their goods. For the purpose of humiliating the priests, it was pretended that the High Priest ought to be chosen by lot, and they thrust into the venerable office a poor peasant, who was totally ignorant of the necessary duties. Hanan the Younger, a man of great courage and of high authority, because he and his family had long been the wealthiest and most eminent of the High Priests, made one more attempt to rouse the wretched citizens against this brutal tyranny, which, in the name of religion and patriotism, was guilty of the most awful crimes. To the last, and to the utmost of his power, he was true to the traditional policy of his house, which was so to act that "the Romans might not come and take away their place and nation."[1] It was for this reason only that he had so far yielded as to give an apparent sanction to the revolt. But he was as little able to stay the shocks of the subsequent earthquake as Mirabeau or Lafayette to stem the course of the French Revolution. When these tremendous outbreaks have fairly begun, their issues always belong to the most violent. The Zealots were the Montagnards of the Jewish revolt. John of Giscala, while he swore a most solemn oath that he was faithful to the party of moderation, betrayed all their plans to the Zealots. A combat ensued, in which the party of Hanan succeeded in driving the Zealots into the inner courts of the Temple. Then, at

[1] John xi. 48—50; xviii. 14. Josephus, with his usual untrustworthiness where he had any purpose to serve, directly contradicts himself as to the character of Hanan (*B. J.* iv. 3, § 7; *Vit.* 39).

the instigation of John, the Zealots introduced 3,000 Idumeans into the city, by sawing through the bars of the city gates, on a night of such violent storm that they were not heard or suspected. The Idumeans, once admitted, began to massacre the people. When their presence was discovered, a wild wail of terror rang through the night, and many of Hanan's party flung themselves in despair from the walls and porticos of the Temple. The massacre was continued in the city. Zealots and Idumeans scourged and tortured the most eminent citizens, and murdered the wealthy Zachariah, the son of Baruch, under circumstances of peculiar brutality.[1] They not only killed Hanan the Younger, and Jesus son of Gamala, but, with unheard-of ruthlessness, stripped naked the bodies of these venerable priests, and flung them forth unburied to be devoured by dogs and jackals.

The scenes enacted at Jerusalem during this year, A.D. 68, and the year following, may perhaps be faintly paralleled by the worst orgies of the Reign of Terror, but far exceeded them in stark and irredeemable wickedness. The Idumeans, says Josephus, "fell upon the people as a flock of profane animals, and cut their throats." It was not long before they were so gorged with plunder, so sated with blood, so sick of their own brutalities, that with a qualm of self-disgust they expressed repentance, opened the prisons which they had themselves filled, and, leaving the city, joined Simon, the son of Giora. But the Zealots did not pause for a moment in their work of horror. They murdered Gorion, and Niger of Perea, and every noble

[1] In Matt. xxiii. 35, "Son of Barachias," is probably an ancient but mistaken gloss (see my *Life of Christ*, ii. p. 246, *n.*).

citizen that was left. They sold to the rich permission to fly, and murdered all who attempted to escape without bribing them. Vespasian and his soldiers were glad to look on and see these infatuated wretches do the work of their Roman enemies. Mercy seemed to be dead. All the streets of the city, all the roads about the city, were heaped with unburied corpses, which putrefied in the sun. Brigands and sicarii raged uncontrolled, and the Zealots, who had seized Masada, attacked the town of Engedi, murdered more than 700 women and children, pillaged the town, and terrorised the whole coast of the Dead Sea.

Such was the state of things when the campaign reopened in the spring of 68. The first task of Vespasian was to seize Gadara. At Bethennabris there was another slaughter. Placidus pursued the fugitive Jews to Jericho. It happened that at this time the Jordan was in flood. Such multitudes were drowned that the river and the Dead Sea were filled with corpses, as the Sea of Galilee had been after the siege of Tarichea. Thirteen thousand were left dead upon the field; 2,200 were taken prisoners. Every other Perean town which offered resistance was taken. Those who took refuge in boats on the Dead Sea were chased and slain. On the eastern bank of the Jordan Machærus alone remained in the hands of the rebels.

The reader may now understand something of the force of the expression in the Apocalypse, that when the vintage of the land was trodden, the blood without the city rolled in a torrent, bridle deep, for a distance of 1,600 furlongs.[1] The length of the Holy Land, from Dan to Beersheba, is 139 miles; but over a still

[1] Rev. xiv. 19, 20.

larger area, from Tyre—nay, even from Damascus —in the north, to Engedi in the south, the whole country had been scathed with fire and drowned in blood. The expression of the seer would hardly seem an hyperbole to one who had seen the foul red stains which had polluted the silver Lake of Gennesareth; the Jordan choked with putrefying corpses; even the waves of the Dead Sea rendered loathlier than their wont with the carcases of the countless slain. No one could witness, no one could think of those unsparing massacres without having his eyes dimmed, as it were, with a mist of blood. "For seven years," says the Talmud, "did the nations of the world cultivate their vineyards with no other manure than the blood of Israel."[1]

But in truth when we read the Jewish annals of these years, we never seem to have reached the cumulus of horrors. It was in vain that—even after he seemed to have drawn round Jerusalem his "circle of extermination"—Vespasian was called away from the scene. He arrived at Jericho on June 3, A.D. 68, but his attention was at once diverted into an entirely different direction. Vindex revolted from Nero on March 15; Galba on April 3; the Prætorians revolted on June 8; on June 9 Nero committed suicide. Vespasian had been flattered by dreams and prognostications of future Empire, to which his ears were always open. Up to this time, however, he had not committed himself, and he now sent Titus with Agrippa to salute Galba as his legitimate Emperor. Before they arrived, the news came that on January 2, A.D. 69, Vitellius had been proclaimed Emperor by the legions of Germany, and

[1] Gittin, f. 57 *a*.

that on January 15 Galba had been murdered, and Otho proclaimed by the Prætorians. Vespasian was not prepared to acknowledge either Otho or Vitellius. He paused in his warlike operations to watch the course of events. But the doomed and miserable land, and the yet more doomed and miserable city, were far from profiting by this respite. It seemed as if the Zealots were now drunken with blood and fury. Simon, son of Giora, had got together an army of slaves and cut-throats, and was spreading terror far and wide. He conquered the Idumeans, and desolated their country with fire and sword. He repelled an attack of the Zealots, and drove them back into Jerusalem. When, by a stratagem, they had captured his wife, he seized all who came out of the city, cut off their hands, sent them back, and threatened to treat every one of the citizens in the same way, if his wife were not restored to him. Power was given to the mystic rider of the Red Horse, says St. John, "to take peace from the earth, and that men should slay one another."[1] Civil war raged within and without the city with such fury, that the Romans almost appeared in the guise of friends. All who attempted to fly from Simon were murdered by John; all the fugitives of John were murdered by Simon. At last, in despair at the tyranny of John, the people admitted Simon within the walls. The only difference was that they had now two tyrants instead of one. John and his Zealots were confined to the Temple, and were the fewer in number; but from its height and impregnable position they were enabled to make sallies, and to hurl down upon their enemies from the captured engines of the Romans, a perfect hail of

[1] Rev. vi. 4.

missiles. In the incessant collision between the hostile factions, all the houses in the neighbourhood of the Temple were burnt down. It was surrounded by a chaos of blackened ruins, in which unburied corpses bred pestilence in the summer noon. Not only the streets, but even the courts and altar of the Temple constantly swam in blood. Priest and pilgrim mingled their blood with their sacrifices, smitten down by balistæ or catapults as they stood beside the altar. Their feet were soiled, so that they polluted every corner of the holy precincts with steps encrimsoned by the uncleansed pools of gore, which told the tale of daily slaughter. Every semblance of performing the rites of religion was reduced to the most monstrous mockery. It was impossible that men could breathe this reeking atmosphere of blood and crime, in which every brain seemed to reel with the hideous intoxication, without a total collapse of the moral sense. At the very time that the Zealots were representing themselves as the God-protected champions of a cause the most sacred in the world, they had become so dead to every precept of religion, that, putting on the robes and ornaments of women, decking their hair, painting underneath their eyes, but carrying swords under their gay female apparel, they plunged headlong into such nameless obscenities, that it seemed as if the city had become not only a slaughter-house, and a robbers' cave, but a very cage of unclean beasts, fit only to be taken and destroyed. "How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers."[1] Very early, amid these scenes of horror, it must have been evident to the

[1] Isa. i. 21.

little Christian community, that "the abominable wing that maketh desolate,"[1] was standing in the Holy Place, which was now more shamelessly defiled than any shrine of Moloch or Baal Peor. Well might they recognise that the city which was known as "the Holy, the Noble," was "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified."[2]

Thus horrible was the aspect of the world—politically, morally, socially, even physically—during the months in which the Apocalypse was written. *Physically* men seemed to be tormented and terrified with catastrophes and portents. "Besides the manifold changes and chances of human affairs," says Tacitus, "there were prodigies in heaven and on earth, the warnings of lightnings, and the presages of the future, now joyous, now gloomy, now obscure, now unmistakable. For never was it rendered certain by clearer indications, or by more deadly massacres of the Roman people, that the gods care nothing for our happiness, but do care for our retribution."[3] In Rome a pestilence had carried off tens of thousands of the citizens. A disastrous inundation of the Tiber had impeded the march of Otho's troops, and encumbered the roads with ruins.[4] In Lydia an encroachment of the sea had wrought fearful havoc. In Asia city after city had been shattered to the dust by earthquakes.[5] "The

[1] Dan. ix. 27; xi. 31; xii. 11; Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14.
[2] Rev. xi. 8. [3] Tac. *H.* i. 3. [4] Tac. *H.* i. 86.
[5] Eusebius (*Chron.* A.D. 17) mentions Ephesus, Magnesia, Sardis, Ægae, Philadelphia, Tmolus, Apollonia, Dia, &c. In the third book of the *Sibyllines* (iii. 337—366) many others are mentioned.

world itself is being shaken to pieces," says Seneca, "and there is universal consternation."[1] Comets, eclipses, meteors, parhelions, terrified the ignorant, and were themselves the pretexts for imperial cruelties.[2] Auroras tinged the sky with blood. Volcanos seemed, like Vesuvius, to be waking to new fury.[3] *Morally*, the state of the Pagan world was such as we have seen. It was sunk so low that, in the opinion of the Pagan moralists of the empire, posterity could but imitate and could not surpass such a virulence of degradation. The state of the Jewish world is revealed alike in the Gospels, in the Talmud, and in the writings of Josephus. It may suffice to quote the opinion of the latter that his own generation in Judea was the wickedest that the world had seen, and that if the avenging sword of the Romans had not smitten Jerusalem with God's vengeance, the very earth must have opened to swallow up her iniquities. *Socially*, we see how desperate was the condition alike of Jews and Pagans, in St. Paul, St. James, and Josephus on the one hand, and in Tacitus, Suetonius, and the Satirists on the other. *Politically*, the whole empire was in a state of agitation. That the sacred sun of the Julii should set in a sea of blood seemed an event frightfully ominous, while, owing to the obscurity which hung about the death of Nero, and the very small number of those who had seen his corpse, and the prophecies which had always been current about his complete restoration, not only was there a universal belief that he would return, but as early as the end of A.D. 68 a false Nero gained many adherents, and

[1] Sen. *Nat. Qu.* vi. 1. [2] Suet. *Ner.* 36.
[3] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 22.

caused wide-spread alarm.[1] The election of Galba by the legions of Spain seemed to divulge a secret full of disaster—the fact that an emperor could be created elsewhere than at Rome. Emperor after emperor died by suicide or by the hands of assassins.

> "In outlines dim and vast
> Their fearful shadows cast
> The giant forms of Empires on their way
> To ruin;—one by one
> They tower, and they are gone—"

The Romish world and the Jewish world were alike rent by civil war. There were banquets in the reign of Nero at which seven emperors and the father of an eighth—for the most part entirely unrelated to one another—might have met under the same roof, namely Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, and the elder Trajan;[2] and five of these, if not six, died violent deaths. Every general of the smallest eminence became ambitious to raise himself to "the dread summits of Cæsarian power."[3] Vindex, Nymphidius, Galba, Vitellius, Vespasian, Claudius Macer in Africa, Fonteius Capito in Germany, Betuus Chilo in Gaul, Obultronius and Cornelius Sabinus in Spain, were all seized with the vertigo of this ambition; while the generals who helped their various attempts—such as Cæcina, Valens, Mucianus, Antonius Primus—became themselves the objects of jealousy and suspicion. More than once the soldiers had serious thoughts of murdering all the senators, in order to keep the whole government of the world in their own hands.[4] Almost alone among the crowd of military

[1] Suet. *Ner.* 40, 57.
[2] Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, p. 481.
[3] See Merivale, *Hist* vi. 374.
[4] Tac. *H.* i. 80; Dion. Cass. lxiv. 9.

chieftains Virginius stood superior to these dreams of usurpation, and when he died peacefully, full of years and honours, he deserved the proud epitaph which he engraved upon his tomb, that he, when Vindex was defeated,[1] "claimed the Empire not for himself but for his country."[2] The fatal results of consular ambition might be seen on the field of Bedriacum. There the very roads were obstructed with the mounds of the dead, and the massacre was all the more deadly because Romans could not be sold as slaves, so that no one on either side was tempted to pause from slaughter in the hope of booty. After a desperate hand-to-hand conflict between Romans and Romans, which heaped the field with an almost incredible number of the slain,[3] "the soldiers fell sobbing into one another's arms, and all denounced in common the wickedness of civil war." Amid portents so threatening and scenes so terrible, it is not strange that the hearts of men should have been failing them for fear. There had been for many years an all but universal impression that the days of Rome were numbered. It had probably originated from the expectations of Jews and Christians, and is found again and again in the Sibylline books.[4] In Dion Cassius we read that a proverb was prevalent that when thrice three hundred years had passed, or in the beginning of the tenth century since Rome was founded, she should perish.[5] It was even sung as a

[1] "Hic situs est Rufus, pulso qui Vindice quondam,
Imperium asseruit non sibi sed patriæ."—(Plin. *Ep.* vi. 10.)

[2] Tac. *H.* ii. 44.

[3] Dion Cassius (lxiv. 10) mentions the fearful but most improbable total of 400,000 (τέσσαρες μυριάδες). Tacitus (*H.* ii. 44) calls it a *strages*.

[4] *Orac. Sibyll.* ii. 15, 19; iii. 46—59; vii. 111—112, &c.

[5] Dion Cass. lvii. 18; lxii. 18.

song in the streets, that after thrice three hundred years internal sedition should destroy the Romans; and at a later period, the line "Last of the descendants of Æneas, a matricide shall reign," was on everybody's lips. "Rome shall be ruins," says one of the Sibyllists, writing long before the Apocalypse. The calculations of that Jewish form of Kabbalism which was known as *Gematria*—or the substitution of numerical values for words—led the writers of the Sibyllines to notice that the numerical value of the letters of Rome was 948, and they therefore prophesied that in that year Rome should be destroyed.[1] They thought that Nero would awake from the dead to accomplish this vengeance; and that "dark blood should mark the track of the Beast."[2] The Sibyls, says Lactantius, "say openly that Rome shall perish, and that by the judgment of God."[3] The topic of them all is, in prophetic language, "The burden of Rome."

And amid all these evils—these multiplied signs of the approaching end—the "woes of the Messiah" afflicted the Church also. Two of the greatest cities of the world—Rome, the spiritual Babylon, Jerusalem, the spiritual Sodom—had drunk deep of the blood of the prophets and saints of Christ. Nor had the guilt of such murders been confined to them. "Through all the provinces" it seemed as if Satan had come down having great wrath, as knowing that his time was short. Many a nameless martyr in the various cities of the Empire had been added to that "vast multitude," who, in the Neronian persecution, had suffered their baptism of blood. Yet even persecu-

[1] Ῥωμὴ = 100+800+40+8 = 948. (*Orac. Sib.* viii. 147.)
[2] *Id.* 157. [3] Lactant. *Div. Inst.* vii. 15.

tion from without had not secured the Church from the growth of deadly heresies within. Every one of the Apostles had been driven to utter words of sternest warning against teachers who, while they called themselves Christians, were guilty of worse than heathen wickedness—who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and made their liberty a cloak for evil lives. Thus alike the Jewish and the heathen world, each at the nadir of their degradation and impiety, were bent upon the destruction of Christ's little flock; and even into that little flock had intruded many who came in sheep's clothing, though inwardly they were ravening wolves.

Such were "the signs of the times" during the course of these awful years in which St. John found himself on the rocky isle "that is called Patmos,"[1] and uttered his prophecies respecting the past, the present, and the immediate future. In those prophecies we see the aspect of the age as it presented itself to the inspired mind of a Christian and an Apostle; and we can compare and contrast it with the aspects which it presented to heathens like Tacitus and Suetonius, or to Jews like Josephus and the authors or interpolators of the Books of Enoch and Esdras. It is true that our want of familiarity with Apocalyptic symbols which were familiar to the Jewish Christians of that epoch, seems at first to give to many of the Apostle's thoughts an unwonted obscurity. But, on the one hand, the obscurity does not

[1] The expression militates against the notion of Renan, that Patmos was at this time populous and well-known.

affect those elements of the book which we at once feel to be of the most eternal import; and on the other, we are only left in the dark about minor details which have found no distinct record in history. Let any student compare the symbols of the Apocalypse with those of Joel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel; let him then see how those symbols are applied by the almost contemporary writers of such Jewish Apocalypses as the Book of Enoch, the Fourth Book of Esdras, and the Vision of Baruch; let him meditate on the conditions of the age in the particulars which we have just been passing in review; lastly, let him bear in mind the luminous principle that the Apocalypse is a stormy comment upon the great discourse of our Lord on Olivet, as it was being interpreted by the signs of the times, and he will read the Vision of the Apostle with a freshness of interest and a clearness of apprehension such as he may never previously have enjoyed. He will then see in it, from first to last, the words "Maran atha! the Lord cometh!" He will recognise that the contemplated Coming was first fulfilled in the catastrophe which closed the Jewish dispensation, and the inauguration of the last age of the world. He will find that the Apocalypse is what it professes to be—an inspired outline of contemporary history, and of the events to which the sixth decade of the first century gave immediate rise. He will read in it the tremendous counter-manifesto of a Christian Seer against the bloodstained triumph of imperial heathendom; a pæan and a prophecy over the ashes of the martyrs; "the thundering reverberation of a mighty spirit," struck by the fierce plectrum of the Neronian persecution, and answering in

impassioned music which, like many of David's Psalms, dies away into the language of rapturous hope.

And thus we shall strive to overcome that spirit of dislike to the Revelation of St. John which has existed in so many ages. We have already seen that this dislike existed among the Alogi,[1] and that it finds expression in the remains of the Presbyter Gaius, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Eusebius of Cæsarea. In later ages the disinclination to accept its authenticity found more or less open expression in the writings of Erasmus, Calvin, Zwingli, Luther, Œcolampadius, Bucer, Carlstadt, as well as in those of Scaliger, Lowth, Schleiermacher, Goethe, and many others. This alienation from the book arose in the ancient Church from the abuse of it by the fanaticism and narrowness of the Chiliasts; in the modern Church from the Hellenic taste which took offence at its Judaic imagery, and from the discredit which it has suffered at the hands of rash, uncharitable, and half-educated interpreters. Even the most reverent enquirers have pronounced it to be unintelligible.[2] Such views of it can only be

[1] The Alogi were those who rejected the doctrine of the Logos, and therefore the writings of St. John. The name of this obscure sect, which had its headquarters at Thyatira, seems to have been invented by Epiphanius:—*ἐπεὶ οὖν τὸν Λόγον οὐ δέχονται . . . . ἄλογοι κληθήσονται* (*Haer.* li. 3). They attributed the Apocalypse to Cerinthus, declaring that a book about seals, trumpets, &c., was unworthy of an Apostle, and saying that he addressed a Church in Thyatira, when there was no Church in Thyatira.

[2] Dionysius of Alexandria says that the Alogi spoke with positive scorn (*χλευάζοντες*) of the Apocalypse, and that some, before his day, not only rejected it, but criticised it chapter by chapter to demonstrate its illogical character, and denied that it could be a Revelation, seeing that it had been covered with so dense a veil of non-intelligibility. They, like Gaius, attributed it to Cerinthus. Junilius tells us that the Eastern Church had great doubts about it. "*Fateor multa me in ejus dictis saepissime legendo scrutatum esse nec intellexisse*," says Primasius,

removed by a reasonable, a charitable, and—at least within broad limits—a certain exegesis.

For if indeed the Apocalypse were the kind of treatise which it has become in the hands of controversialists from the Abbot Joachim downwards—if it were a synopsis of anticipated Church history, ringing with the most vehement anathemas of sectarian hatred, and yet shrouded in such ambiguity that every successive interpreter has a new scheme for its elucidation—if it were a book in which only Protestants could take delight because it is supposed to express the intensest spirit of denunciation against the errors of

even in the sixth century. St. Gregory of Nyssa (*Opp.* ii. 44, ed. Paris) quotes from the Apocalypse as a writing of St. John, ἐν ἀποκρύφοις . . . δι' αἰνίγματος λέγοντος, but this expression does *not* necessarily mean that he regarded it as deutero-canonical. Jerome, in the fourth century, said that the book had as many mysteries as words (Ep. liii. *ad Paulinum*), and Augustine admitted that it was full of obscurities, due in part to its repetition of the same events with different symbols, and in part to the absence of definitive clues. "*Et in hoc quidem libro obscure multa dicuntur . . . et pauca in eo sunt ex quorum manifestatione indagentur caetera cum labore, maxime quia sic eadem multis modis repetit*" (Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xx. 17). Nicolaus Collado (*Methodus*, 1584) dwells on the same peculiarity (see Düsterdieck, p. 17). "*Apocalypsim fateor me nescire exponere juxta sensum literalem; exponat cui Deus concessit*," wrote Cardinal Cajetan (*Opp.* v. 401). Zwingli said he took no account of it: "*Dann es nit ein biblish Buch ist*" (*Werke*, ii. 169). Tyndale wrote no preface to the Apocalypse. Luther calls it "a dumb prophecy." He says, "*Mein Geist kann sich, in das Buch nicht stricken, und ist mir Ursach genug dass ich sein nicht hoch achte dass Christus darinnen weder gelehrt nach erkannt wird.*" Gravina says, "*Mihi tota Apocalypsis valde obscura videtur, et talis cujus explicatio citra periculum vix queat tentari.*" Quite recent commentators have held similar language. "*Ein Buch von dem man ganze Capitel nach Ausdrückung von einigen Tropfen sauft als leere Schalen beiseite-legen muss*" (De Wette). "No book of the New Testament has so defied all attempts to settle its interpretation" (Bloomfield). "I cannot pretend to explain the book; I do not understand it" (Adam Clarke). "No solution has ever been given of this part of the prophecy" (Alford). "*Deutero-kanonische Dignität kommt ihr zu, aber nicht weniger*" (Düsterdieck).

a Church which, whatever may be its errors, is still a sister Church—then it might be excusable if the spirits of those who seek peace and ensue it, and who look on brotherly love between Christians as the crown of virtue and the test of true religion, should turn away from the book with a sense of perplexity and weariness. They could never gain much comfort and edification from any pulpit in which

> "A loud-tongued pulpiteer,
> Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,
> Announced the coming doom, and fulminated
> Against the scarlet woman and her creed.
> For sidewise up he flung his arms, and shrieked
> 'Thus, thus with violence,' as though he held
> The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself
> Were that great Angel—'thus with violence
> Shall Babylon be thrown into the sea.
> Then comes the end.'"[1]

There are few of us who would find much music in such "loud-tongued anti-Babylonianisms" as these. The blind fumes of party hatred can only distract and lead astray. The spirit of the Inquisition, even when it is found in Protestants, is essentially anti-Christian. It is a scorpion-locust out of the abyss. But when we put ourselves in the position of the Seer, and grasp the clues to his meaning which he has himself furnished—when we accept his own assurance that he is mainly dealing with events which were on the immediate horizon—when, lastly, we discount the Oriental hyperboles which, in fact, cease to be hyperbolical if they be understood in their normal usage, then for the

[1] Tennyson (*Sea Dreams*). "*Totum hunc librum . . . spectare praecipue ad describendam tyrannidem spiritualem Romani papatus et totius cleri ejus*" (Nic. Collado, *ap.* Düsterdieck, p. 48).

first time we begin to understand the Apocalypse in all its passion and grandeur, as it was understood by those for whom it was written. We no longer expect to find in it the Saracen conquests, or the Waldenses, or the French Revolution, or "the rise of Tractarianism." We are soothed by its heavenly consolations and inspired by its inextinguishable hopes. When read in the light of events then contemporary, it rolls with all its thunder and burns with all its fires. Over the guilt of Jerusalem, over the guilt of Rome, it hurls the prophecy of inevitable doom. Around the diadem of Nero and the hydra-heads of Paganism in its hour of tyranny and triumph it flashes the sure wrath of heaven.[1] But, like all prophecy, it has "springing and germinal developments." It is the defiance uttered by true Christianity for all time against the tortures, the legions, the amphitheatres, the fagots, the prisons, the thumbscrews, the falsehoods, the inquisitions of that demoniac spirit of persecuting intolerance, which, whether it uses the asp-poison of slander or the sword of murder, is never so irreligious as when it vaunts its zeal for God. Though he wrote in the hour of seeming

[1] The use of the word "diadem" of the Roman Emperor in this book is made much of by the commentators, who try to overthrow the sure results of recent exegesis. They urge that Caligula alone of the Cæsars ever attempted to wear a diadem, as distinguished from a crown or wreath; that Julius Cæsar refused a diadem; that Sulpicius Severus is mistaken when he describes Vespasian as wearing one; and that the first Emperor who boldly assumed this badge of Oriental autocracy—a purple silken fillet, embroidered with pearls—was Diocletian. Meanwhile this imposing array of arguments crumbles at a touch. When Antony offered the diadem to Julius, he betrayed the secret as to the real character of Imperial power. Orientals in the provinces both thought and spoke of the Emperors as "Kings," though such a name would have horrified the Romans; but Oriental kings wore diadems, and therefore the Oriental symbol of the Roman Emperor was the diadem.

ruin, such is the passionate intensity with which the Seer pours forth the language of victory, that it seems as though the hand which he has dipped in the blood of the martyrs flames like a torch as he uplifts it in appeal to the avenging heavens. And since the truths which he utters become needful at the recurrence of every similar crisis—and most of all when the execrable weapons of tyranny are grasped by the reckless hands of sectarian bitterness—the Apocalypse has ever been dearest to God's true saints at the hour of their deepest trials. It ceases then to be a great silent sphinx, reading its eternal riddle at the gate of Scripture, and devouring those who fail to answer it; it becomes a series of glorious pictures, wherein "are set forth the rise, the visible existence, and the general future of Christ's kingdom, in figures and similitudes of His First Coming, to terrify and to console."[1]

There have been three great schools of Apocalyptic interpretation:—1. The Præterists, who regard the book as having been mainly fulfilled. 2. The Futurists, who refer it to events which are still wholly future. 3. The Continuous-Historical Interpreters, who see in it an outline of Christian history from the days of St. John down to the End of all things. The second of these schools — the Futurists — has always been numerically small, and at present may be said to be non-existent. The school of Historical Interpreters was founded by the Abbot Joachim early in the 13th century, and was specially flourishing in the first fifty years of the present century.[2] The views of the Præ-

[1] Herder.

[2] There are two schools of the interpreters who make the Apocalypse a prophecy of all Christian history. The school of Bengel, Vitringa, Elliott, &c., make it mainly a history of *the Church*. Another school

terists have been adopted, with various shades of modification, by Grotius, Hammond, Le Clerc, Bossuet, Eichhorn, Hug, Wetstein, Ewald, Herder, Zullig, Bleek, De Wette, Lücke, Moses Stuart, Davidson, Volkmar, Krenkel, Düsterdieck, Renan, and almost the whole school of modern German critics and interpreters. It has been usual to say that the Spanish Jesuit Alcasar, in his *Vestigatio arcani sensus in Apocalypsi* (1614), was the founder of the Præterist School, and it certainly seems as if to him must be assigned the credit of having first clearly enunciated the natural view that the Apocalypse, like all other known Apocalypses of the time, describes events nearly contemporaneous, and is meant to shadow forth the triumph of the Church in the struggle first with Judaism and then with Heathendom. But to me it seems that the founder of the Præterist School is none other than St. John himself. For he records the Christ as saying to him when he was in the Spirit, "Write the things which thou sawest, and THE THINGS WHICH ARE, and the things which are about to happen (ἃ μέλλει γίνεσθαι) after these things." No language surely could more clearly define the bearing of the Apocalypse. It is meant to describe the contemporary state of things in the Church and the world, and the events which were to follow in immediate sequence. If the Historical School can strain the latter words into an indication that we are (contrary to all analogy) to have a symbolic and unintelligible sketch of many centuries, the Præterist School may at any rate

regards it more generally, and less specifically, as an outline of Epochs of the History of *the world* and the great forces which shape it into a Kingdom of God. To this latter school belong Hengstenberg, Ebrard, Auberlen, &c.

apply these words, ἃ εἰσὶν, "THE THINGS WHICH ARE," to vindicate the application of a large part of the Apocalypse to events nearly contemporary, while they also give the natural meaning to the subsequent clause by understanding it of events which were then on the horizon. The Seer emphatically says that the future events which he has to foreshadow will occur *speedily* (ἐν τάχει,)[1] and the recurrent burden of his whole book is the nearness of the Advent (ὁ καιρὸς ἐγγύς). Language is simply meaningless if it is to be so manipulated by every successive commentator as to make the words "speedily" and "near" imply any number of centuries of delay. The Præterist method of interpretation does not, however, interfere with that view of prophecy which was so well defined by Dr. Arnold. This is the view of those who have been called the "spiritual" interpreters. It admits of the *analogical* application of prophecy to conditions which, in the cycles of history, bear a close resemblance to each other. It applies to all times the principles originally laid down with reference to events which were being then enacted, and starts with the axiom of Bacon, that divine prophecies have steps and grades of fulfilment through divers ages.[2] All that is really valuable in the works of the Historical Interpreters may thus be retained. No importance can be attached

[1] Comp. ταχὺ (Rev. ii. 5, 16; iii. 11; xi. 14; xxii. 20). It is curious to see with what extraordinary ease commentators explain the perfectly simple and ambiguous expression "speedily" (ἐν τάχει), to mean any length of time which they may choose to demand. The word "*immediately*," in Matt. xxiv. 29, has been subject to similar handling, in which indeed all Scripture exegesis abounds. The failure to see that the Fall of Jerusalem and the end of the Mosaic Dispensation was a "Second Advent"—and *the* Second Advent contemplated in many of the New Testament prophecies—has led to a multitude of errors.

[2] *De Augment. Scient.* ii. 11.

to their limitation of particular symbols, but the better part of their labours may be accepted as an illustration of the manner in which the Apocalyptic symbols convey moral lessons which are applicable to the conditions of later times.

But, apart from St. John's own words, it cannot be conceded that the central conception of the Prætorist exegesis is a mere novelty of the 17th century. On the contrary, we can trace from very early days the application of various visions to the early emperors of Pagan Rome. Thus Justin Martyr believed that the Antichrist would be a person who was close at hand, and who would reign three and a half years.[1] Irenæus also thought that Antichrist, as foreshadowed by the Wild Beast, would be a man; and that "the number of the Beast" represented *Lateinos*, "a Latin."[2] Hippolytus compares the action of the False Prophet giving life to the Beast's image, to Augustus inspiring fresh force into the Roman Empire.[3] Later on, I shall furnish abundant evidence that a tradition of the ancient Church identified Nero with the Antichrist, and expected his literal return, just as the Jews expected the literal return of the Prophet Elijah. St. Victorinus (about A.D. 303) counts the five dead emperors from Galba, and supposes that, after Nerva, the Beast (whom he identifies with Nero) will be recalled to life.[4] St. Augustine mentions a similar opinion.[5] The Pseudo-Prochorus, writing on Rev. xvii. 10, says that the "one head which *is*" is meant for Domitian. Bishop Andreas, in the fifth cen-

[1] *Dial. c. Tryph.* p. 250.
[2] Iren. *Haer.* v. 25.
[3] *De Antichristo*, p. 6.
[4] "Bestia de septem est quoniam ante ipsos reges Nero regnavit."
[5] *De Civ. Dei*, xx. 19.

tury, applies Rev. vi. 12 to the siege of Jerusalem, and considers that Antichrist will be "as a king of the Romans." Bishop Arethas, on Rev. vii., implies that the Apocalypse was written before the Jewish War. The fragments of ancient comment which we possess cannot be said to have much intrinsic value; but such as they are they suffice to prove that the tendency of modern exegesis approaches quite as nearly to the earliest traditions as that of the Historic School. It is a specially important fact that St. Augustine, as well as many others, recognised the partially *retrogressive and iterative* character of the later visions, and thereby sanctioned one of the most important principles of modern interpretation.[1] The internal evidence that the book was written before the fall of Jerusalem has satisfied not only many Christian commentators, who are invidiously stigmatised as "rationalistic," but even such writers as Wetstein, Lücke, Neander, Stier, Auberlen, Ewald, Bleek, Gebhardt, Immer, Davidson, Düsterdieck, Moses Stuart, F. D. Maurice, the author of "The Parousia," Dean Plumptre, the authors of the *Protestanten-Bibel*, and multitudes of others no less entitled to the respect of all Christians.

If, however, the reader still looks with prejudice and suspicion on the *only* school of Apocalyptic exegesis which unites the suffrages of the most learned recent commentators in Germany, France, and England, I hardly know where he is to turn. The reason why the early date and mainly contemporary explanation of the book is daily winning fresh adherents among unbiassed thinkers of every Church and school, is partly because it rests on so simple and secure a

[1] *Id. ib.* 17.

basis, and partly because no other can compete with it. It is indeed the only system which is built on the plain and repeated statements and indications of the Seer himself, and the corresponding events are so closely accordant with the symbols as to make it certain that this scheme of interpretation is the only one that can survive. A few specimens may suffice to show how completely other systems float in the air.

Let us suppose that the student has found out that in viii. 13 the true reading is "a single eagle," not an angel; but, whether eagle or angel, he wants to know what the symbol means. He turns to the commentators, and finds that it is explained to be the Holy Spirit (Victorinus); or Pope Gregory the Great (Elliott); or St. John himself (De Lyra); or St. Paul (Zeger); or Christ himself (Wordsworth). The Præterists mostly take it to be simply an eagle, as the Scriptural type of carnage—the figure being suggested not by the resemblance of the word "woe!" ("*ouai*") to the eagle's screams, but by the use of the same symbol for the same purpose by our Lord in His discourse about the things to come.[1]

But this is nothing! The student wishes to learn what is meant by the star fallen from heaven, in ix. 1. The Historical school will leave him to choose between an evil spirit (Alford); a Christian heretic (Wordsworth); the Emperor Valens (De Lyra); Mohammed (Elliott); and, among others, Napoleon (Hengstenberg)!

The confusion deepens as we advance. The locusts

[1] Matt. xxiv. 28.

are "heretics" (Bede); or Goths (Vitringa); or Vandals (Aureolus); or Saracens (Mede); or the mendicant orders (Brightman); or the Jesuits (Scherzer); or Protestants (Bellarmine).

The same endless and aimless diversity reigns throughout the entire works of the Historical interpreters; none of them seems to satisfy any one but himself. The elaborate anti-papal interpretation of Elliott—of which (to show that I am far from prejudiced) I may mention, in passing, that I made a careful study and a full abstract when I was seventeen years old—is all but forgotten. Mr. Faber admits that there is not the least agreement as to the first four trumpets among writers of his school, and he rightly says that "so curious a circumstance may well be deemed the opprobrium of Apocalyptic interpretation, and may naturally lead us to suspect that the true key to the distinct application of the first four trumpets has never yet been found."

Not that this school leave us any better off when we come to the seven thunders. They are seven unknown oracles (Mede); or events (Ebrard); or the seven crusades (Vitringa); or the seven Protestant kingdoms (Dunbar); or the Papal Bull against Luther (Elliott).

The two wings of the great eagle in xii. 14 are the two Testaments (Wordsworth); or the eastern and western divisions of the empire (Mede, Auberlen); or the Emperor Theodosius (Elliott).

The number of the Beast—which may be now regarded as *certainly* intended to stand for Nero—has been made to serve for Genseric, Benedict, Trajan, Paul V., Calvin, Luther, Mohammed, Napoleon—not

to mention a host of other interpretations which no one has ever accepted except their authors.[1]

It is needless to multiply further instances. They might be multiplied almost indefinitely, but their *multiplicity* is not so decisive of the futility of the principles on which they are selected, as is the *diversity of results* which are wider than the poles asunder. What are we to say of methods which leave us to choose between the applicability of a symbol to the Holy Spirit or to Pope Gregory, to the Two Testaments or to the Emperor Theodosius? Anyone, on the other hand, who accepts the Præterist system finds a wide and increasing consensus among competent enquirers of all nations, and can see an explanation of the book which is simple, natural, and noble—one which closely follows its own indications, and accords with those to be found throughout the New Testament. He sees that events, mainly contemporary, provide an interpretation clear in its outlines, though necessarily uncertain in minor details. If he takes the view of the Spiritualists, he may at his pleasure make the symbols mean anything in general and nothing in particular. If he is of the Historical School he must let the currents of Gieseler or Gibbon sweep him hither and thither at the will of the particular commentator in whom he for the time may chance to confide. But if he follows the guidance of a more reasonable exegesis, he may advance with a sure step along a path which becomes clearer with every fresh discovery.

But I cannot leave this subject of Apocalyptic interpretation without repeating my conviction, that

[1] The majority of guesses which have the least seriousness in them point to Rome, the Roman Empire, or the Roman Emperor.

the *essential* sacredness and preciousness of the book lies deeper than the primary or secondary interpretations of its separate visions. Whatever system of exegesis we adopt—whether we suppose that St. John was indicating to the Churches of Asia the influence of Mohammed, Hildebrand, and Luther centuries later—whether he was foreshadowing events of which they could not have the remotest comprehension, or events with which they were immediately and terribly concerned—he is, at any rate, dealing on the one hand with awful warnings, and on the other with exceeding great and precious promises. His teaching is needful for our education in the ways of God. It will be well for every Christian to take it deeply to heart. Amid endless diversities, here at any rate is a point respecting which all true Christians may be cordially agreed.

It is admitted by every unbiassed critic that Apocalyptic literature is inferior in form to the Prophetic. The Jews themselves have marked their sense of this by excluding the Book of Daniel from the prophetic canons, and placing it among the Hagiographa. Apocalypses belong, as a rule, to later ages and less vivid inspiration. Why then, it may be asked, did St. John choose this form of utterance? The answer is simple. It was, first, because it was in this form that his inspiration came to him; it was in this form that his thoughts naturally clothed themselves. It was, next, because the Apocalypse was the favourite form of the prophetico-poetic literature of this epoch, with which many instances had made his readers familiar. But lastly, and perhaps chiefly, it was from the dangers of the time. An Apocalypse, by the very meaning of the term, implies a book which

is more or less cryptographic in its contents. Hence in every Apocalypse—in the Books of Esdras, Enoch, and Baruch, no less than in St. John—there are for us some necessary difficulties in the details of interpretation which perhaps did not exist for contemporary readers. But if anything were obscure to them, this was more than compensated by the resultant safety. No danger incurred by the early Christians was greater than that caused by the universal prevalence of political spies. If one of these wretches got possession of any Christian writing which could be construed into an attack or a reflexion upon their terrible persecutors, hundreds might be involved in indiscriminate punishment on a charge of high treason (*laesa majestas*), which was then the most formidable engine of despotic power. St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians even so early as A.D. 52, had found it necessary to speak of the Roman Empire and of the Emperors Claudius or Nero in terms of studied enigma.[1] St. Peter, making a casual allusion to Rome, had been obliged to veil it under the mystic name of Babylon.[2] Even Josephus has to break off his explanation of the Book of Daniel with mysterious suddenness, rather than indicate that the fate of the Roman Empire was there foreshadowed. Concealed methods of allusion are, for similar reasons, again and again adopted in the Talmud. St. John saw in Nero a realisation of Antichrist; but it would have been fatal to whole communities, perhaps to the entire Church, if he had openly committed to writing either the indication of Nero's character or the prophecy of his doom. He could only do this in the guise of Scriptural and prophetic symbols, which would look like meaningless rhapsodies

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 3—12. [2] 1 Pet. v. 13.

to any Gentile reader, but of which, as he was well aware, the secret significance was in the hands of those for whom alone his revelation was intended. It may be laid down as a rule, to which there is no exception, that the commentator who approaches the Apocalypse without the fullest recognition of the fact that in its tone and in its symbols it bears a very close analogy to a multitude of other Apocalyptic books, both Jewish and Christian, is sure to go utterly astray. But if he knows the symbols and their significance, not only from the Old Testament but also from seeing how the imagery of the Old Testament was applied in the first century to contemporary events, he will be prepared to see that to the original readers of the Apocalypse, at any rate, the book had and could have but one meaning, and that the intended meaning is still partially discoverable by those who do not read its visions through the ecclesiastical veil of unnatural and fantastic hypotheses.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE APOCALYPSE.

"Apocalypsis Johannis tot habet sacramenta quot verba. Parum dixi pro merito voluminis. Laus omnis inferior est."—JER. *ad Paulin.*

IN the superscription of the Apocalypse found in some of the cursive manuscripts, St. John is called by the title of "the Theologian," or, as it is rendered in our version, "the Divine." It was a title borne by the highest order of priests in the Temple of the Ephesian Artemis, as appears from inscriptions discovered by Mr. Wood at Ephesus. It is, however, unlikely that St. John bore the title in his own day, or that it was intended to contrast him with the local and pagan hierarchy. It was more probably due to the grandeur of his witness to Christ as the Divine Logos. It is remarkable that only one great Christian writer has shared it with him—the large-hearted St. Gregory of Nazianzus. The true Theology is the glorious mother of all the sciences, and differs infinitely from the narrow and technical pedantry which has in modern times too often usurped the exclusive name. It would have been well for the world if it could have rescued the term from the degradation to which it has been subjected by Pharisaism and self-assertion. Theology would have received the honour of all mankind if it had not so often mistaken verbal minutiæ for divine essentials, if its self-styled votaries

had caught something of the love and something of the loftiness of the Beloved Disciple of Galilee and the eloquent Patriarch of Constantinople.

SECTION I.

THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

To write a full commentary upon the Apocalypse, or to enter into the numerous questions to which it gives rise, would be impossible in the space at my disposal. All that I can hope to do is to give a rapid outline of its contents, and, so far as ascertainable, of its probable meaning in those parts of its symbolism which are capable of explanation, or which do not at once explain themselves.

After the Prologue,[1] the main sections of the book are arranged in accordance with the number Seven, which is the most prominent among the symbolic numbers with which the book is filled. Thus we have:—

Prologue, i. 1—8.

1. Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, i. 9—iii. 22.
2. The Seven Seals, iv.—vii.
3. The Seven Trumpets, viii.—xi.
4. The Seven Mystic Figures, xii.—xiv.[2]
5. The Seven Vials, xv.—xvi.
6. The Doom of the Foes of Christ, xvii—xx.
7. The Blessed Consummation, xxi.—xxii. 7.

[1] The Vision takes place on "the Lord's Day," which probably means neither "Easter Day," nor the "Day of Judgment," but "Sunday." It is the earliest use of the expression, but furnishes no proof at all of the later date assigned to the Apocalypse.

[2] I borrow this ingenious suggestion from the author of the "*Parousia*," a book full of suggestiveness, although I disagree with the author in its limitation of the Apocalyptic horizon mainly to Jerusalem. The Seven Mystic Figures are:—(1) The Sun-clothed Woman; (2) The Red Dragon; (3) The Man-child; (4) The First Wild Beast from the Sea; (5) The Second Wild Beast from the Land; (6) The Lamb on Mount Sion; (7) The Son of Man on the Cloud.

The Epilogue, xxii. 8—21.[1]

The Seven Churches addressed in the person of their Angels[2] are:—

EPHESUS, the Church faithful as yet, but waxing cold.

SMYRNA, the Church faithful amid Jewish persecutions.

PERGAMUM, the Church faithful amid heathen persecutions, but liable to swerve into Antinomianism.

THYATIRA, the Church faithful as yet, but acquiescent under Antinomian seductions.

SARDIS, the Church slumbering, but not past awakenment.

PHILADELPHIA, the Church faithful and militant.

[1] Ewald divides the book into three main sections of seven members each:—The Seven Seals (iv.—vii.); the Seven Trumpets (viii.—xi. 14); the Seven Vials, with the group of associated Visions (xi. 15—xxii. 3), which are divided into three members (xi. 15—xiv. 20; xv.—xviii.; xix.—xxii. 5). He thinks that the book has an Introduction in four parts; Preface and Dedication in seven parts (ii., iii.); and a Conclusion in three parts. Volkmar's division is into two main parts:—(I.) The Announcement of the Judgment (i.—ix); (II.) The Achievement of the Judgment (x.—xiv.). The subordinate parts are:—Prologue (i. 1—7); (1) First Vision (i. 8—iii.); (2) Second Vision, the Seals (iv.—vii.); (3) Third Vision, the loud Declaration of God's Judgment (viii., ix); (4) Fourth Vision, the Introductory Judgment (x.—xiv.); (5) Fifth Vision, Avenging Justice (xv., xvi.); (6) Sixth Vision, the overthrow of the World-Power, or Rome (xvii., xviii.); (7) Seventh Vision, the Completion of the Judgment (xix.—xxi); Epilogue.—Whatever division of the book be adopted, it will be seen at once that it is constructed in a very artificial manner, and dominated by the numbers seven, three, and four. Seven is the mystic number of peace, expiation, and the covenant between God and man. Three is the signature of the Deity. Four is the number of the world and created things. Ten = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4, indicates completeness. On the symbolism of numbers, see Bähr, *Symbolik.* i. 187, &c. Herzog. *Real. Encycl. s. v.* Zahlen; Lange, *Revelations,* Introd. § 6, &c.

[2] The Angels cannot be the Bishops, for even if the Domitianic date of the Apocalypse be accepted, episcopacy had not even then attained to such proportions, and if the Ancients had supposed the Bishops to be meant, they would have adopted this title in speaking of them. Probably the title implies the Genius of the Church, ideally represented as a Responsible

LAODICEA, the Church unfaithful, proud, lukewarm, and luxurious.[1]

The letters to these Seven Churches are normally sevenfold, consisting of:—1. The address; 2. The title of the Divine Speaker; 3. The encomium; 4. The reproof; 5. The warning; 6. The promise to him that overcometh; 7. The solemn appeal to attention. These elements are, however, freely modified. Two Churches —Smyrna and Philadelphia—receive unmitigated praise. Two—Sardis and Laodicea—are addressed in terms of unmitigated reproof. To the three others—Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira—is awarded a mixture of praise and blame.

The Angel of the Church of Ephesus is praised for "having tried them which called themselves Apostles, and they are not,[2] and having found them false," and also for hating the works of the Nicolaitans. The Angel of the Church of Smyrna is praised for faithfulness amid "the reviling of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." The Angel of the Church of Pergamum is blamed because he has there "some who hold the teaching of the

Head, or Guardian of it; just as Daniel idealises the Angels of the nations (Dan. x. 20, 21; xii. 1).

[1] The number seven is ideal. It is idle to suppose that there were no churches at Tralles, Hierapolis, Laodicea, &c. The book is pervaded by the number seven (i. 4; iv. 5; vii. 1; viii. 2; x. 3; xii. 3; xv. 1; xvii. 9, 10, &c.). It should be observed that the *sacred* numbers are throughout parodied by the anti-sacred numbers.

[2] Men (Dean Plumptre says) of the Hymenæus, Alexander, and Philetus type (1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 17). In the days of Nero there were still false teachers, who called themselves "Apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 13, 14). It is tolerably certain that there were none in the days of Domitian. Hippolytus (recently discovered in an Arabic translation) says that they were "Judaisers *from Jerusalem*," and certainly no such agents were at work so late as A.D. 95.

Nicolaitans, and the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things offered to idols, and to commit fornication." The Angel of the Church of Thyatira is blamed for "suffering the woman Jezebel[1] to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." The Angel of the Church of Philadelphia is promised the victory "over the synagogue of Satan, of them which say they are Jews and they are not, but do lie."

Little is known about the special characteristics of the heresies here alluded to. It would hardly be necessary to notice the wild guesses respecting them but for the increasing confidence of the assertion that these expressions are aimed at St. Paul or his followers. St. Paul is supposed to be the chief of the heresiarchs, and the leader of those who falsely claimed to be Apostles.[2] In other words, we are to believe that the virtue of the Ephesian Church consisted in casting forth the doctrines and adherents of its glorious founder—of the Apostle who had there faced martyrdom, who had there "fought with beasts," who had won the passionate affection of the first presbyters, who had toiled there with infinite devotion for more than two years, admonishing them night and day with tears, and with his own hands ministering to their necessities. The whole theory is monstrous. The

[1] Or, "thy wife Jezebel," A, B, g, Andreas, &c. Dean Blakesley precariously identifies Jezebel with the Hebrew sibyl Sambetha, who was worshipped at Thyatira (Smith's *Dict. Bibl. s. v.* Thyatira). If "thy wife" be the true reading, it presents a curious parallel to the state of the Philippian Church in the days of Polycarp. In his letter to the Philippians (ch. xi.), he speaks of the wife of one of the Presbyters, named Valens, who was guilty of much the same wickedness as this "Jezebel."

[2] See Volkmar, *Commentar zur Offenb.* pp. 79, *seqq.*

tone of deep respect in which the Asiatics Polycarp and Irenæus speak of St. Paul is alone sufficient to overthrow it. St. Paul himself had warned his Churches against "false Apostles." They did not, of course, pretend to be of the number of *the Twelve;* neither did St. Paul. The notion that St. John jealously excludes St. Paul by saying that on the Twelve foundation stones of the New Jerusalem were the names of the "Twelve Apostles of the Lamb," is the idlest extravagance. St. Paul's Apostolate was neither from men, nor by means of men. Unless the calm and definite testimony of St. Luke is to be set aside for the fictions of nameless heretics, the Twelve, and St. John among them, had expressly sanctioned St. Paul's Apostolic claim, had given him their right hands of fellowship, had recognised his equality, had found no fault with his teaching, had sanctioned his independence in his own wide sphere of toil, had even appealed to him for sympathy and assistance in the support of their poor. Polycarp was the hearer and devoted admirer of St. John. If St. John had been actuated by a fanatical horror of St. Paul's teaching, would Polycarp have spoken of the Apostle as "the blessed and glorious Paul?"[1]

As for the Nicolaitans, we know of no excuse for regarding them as Paulinists, even if we admit the absurd notion that Nikolaos, which means "*conquering* the people," is a Greek translation of Bileam, which is precariously rendered "*corrupting* the people."[2] The conduct of Balaam, and the traditional teaching of the

[1] Polyc. *Ep. ad Philip.* 3.

[2] Gesenius and Fürst explain the name to mean "Not of the People,"

Deacon Nicolas,[1] would have been at least as abhorrent to St. Paul as to St. John. He has himself again and again denounced such impure and Antinomian tenets, in language as powerful as and more profoundly reasoned than that of the Apocalypse. He has even drawn the same warning illustration from the example of Balaam.[2] To say that in any sense, literal or allegorical, he or any one of his *genuine* followers ever seduced Christians to fornication, whether in the form of tampering with idolatry, or thinking lightly of uncleanness, is to affix a wanton calumny on one of the purest of the saints of God. If it be true that any Christians distorted to their own perdition, or to that of others, his doctrine of Christian liberty, he was himself the first to utter his warning against such perversions. Nor did he, directly or indirectly, induce men to eat "meat offered to idols." In cases where the conscience was in no way wounded by doing so—in the instance of those who were firmly convinced that an idol is nothing in the world—where the meat was innocently bought in the open market, or eaten in the ordinary intercourse of social life—in those carefully limited

i.e., a foreigner. Vitringa makes it mean "lord of," and Simonis "*destruction* of the people." In no sense is it an equivalent of Nikolaus.

[1] On Nicolas, see my *Life of St. Paul*, i. 133. There is no absolute proof that the heretic was the Deacon, but Irenæus (*Haer.* i. 26; iii. 11) and Hippolytus (*Haer.* vii. 36) supposed him to be so. Clemens of Alexandria (*Strom.* ii. 20; iii. 4) tells a dubious story that when he was accused of jealousy of his beautiful wife, he disproved the charge in a very strange and unseemly way. He is the reputed author of the rule that "we must *abuse* the flesh" (ὅτι δεῖ παραχρῆσθαι τῇ σαρκί), which might convey the innocent meaning that stern self-denial was requisite to repress evil passions. The verb was, however, capable of the meaning "use to the full," and possibly some may have founded on this phrase the wicked inference that criminal passion should be cured by unlimited indulgence. See Ewald, *Gesch.* vii. 172.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 7, 8.

circumstances he had taught, and rightly taught, that the matter was one of pure indifference. If in saying "I will lay on you none other burden," St. John meant (as Renan says) that those had nothing to fear who kept the concordat arranged at the Synod of Jerusalem (Acts xv.), it is strange to overlook that this very concordat had only been won by the genius, the energy, and the initiative of St. Paul. But so far from "casting a stumbling-block" in the path of others, he had, on the contrary, always maintained, as his Lord had done before him,[1] that the casting of stumbling-blocks —which he expressed by the very same word as St. John—is the deadliest of crimes against Christian charity,[2] and that it would be better to eat no meat of any kind while the world lasted than to cause a weak brother to offend.

Again, to suppose that because St. John (Rev. ii. 24) reflects severely on those who talked of "knowing *the depths of Satan*," he must necessarily be uttering a malignant sneer against St. Paul, who had spoken of "the Spirit searching all things, yea, even *the depths of God*,"[3] is to use a style of criticism which builds massive systems upon pillars of smoke. The utmost which we could infer would be that false teachers had distorted and parodied the expression of St. Paul. The single grain of truth in the whole hypothesis is that St. John speaks in a more sweeping and less limited way than St. Paul about eating "meats offered to idols." It was natural that it should be so, both because St. John's Judaic training had given

[1] Matt. xviii. 6, 8, 9; Mark ix. 43—47.
[2] 1 Cor. viii. 13; x. 32; 2 Cor. xi. 29; Rom. xiv. 21.
[3] 1 Cor. ii. 10; comp. Rom. xi. 33.

him a deeper instinctive horror of even the semblance of participation in idolatry, and also because he was writing at a later date and in days of persecution, in which the act itself had acquired a more marked significance. Had St. Paul been writing under the same circumstances as St. John, he would have spoken no less strongly on the sin of a cowardly conformity. To eat of idol offerings in cases where no mistaken inferences could be drawn from doing so, was perfectly innocent; but it became a very different thing to eat of them in days, like those of the Neronian persecution or those of Justin Martyr, when to do so meant to be indifferent to the sin of idolatry. This attempt to represent the Apostles as actuated by a burning animosity against each other, and a determination to "write each other down," as though they were contributors to modern religious newspapers, is a total failure. It is time it were dismissed. When the Apostles differed from each other—as we know, from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Galatians, that they sometimes did—it was only in the spirit of mutual respect and affection in which Luther differed from Melancthon, and Bossuet from Fénélon.[1]

The false Jews, the false Apostles, the Nicolaitans, the Balaamites, were immoral sectarians, whether Judaic or anti-Judaic, against whom St. Paul had beforehand warned his Churches, very much as St. John has done, and against whom every one of the sacred writers has lifted up his voice. To admit that St. John could have written such railing accusations against his

[1] Luther, as a friend reminds me, is sometimes a little severe upon "Philippismus," and Bossuet admitted that he had sometimes argued in opposition to Fénélon without naming him.

glorious brother Apostle, is to imply that he was unworthy to be an Apostle, or a sacred writer at all. It is to degrade him at once to the level of modern partisans. The early Christians had not yet been taught that religion consisted in breathing the atmosphere of faction, slanderousness, and hate. There were some, even then, "who preached Christ of contention, supposing to add affliction to St. Paul's bonds," and they would have been well qualified to write anonymous articles of unfair and unchristian depreciation. But they incurred a stern censure from the lips of Christ's Apostle. Such orthodoxy is heterodoxy; such religion is irreligion; such Christianity is worse than heathendom, and is no Christianity at all.

We reach the culmination of these exegetic absurdities when we find Volkmar also identifying the Second Wild Beast from the Land, and the False Prophet of Rev. xiii. and xvii., with St. Paul!

Writers of the Tübingen School were so enchanted with their discovery that the struggle between Jewish and Pauline Christianity was longer and more permanent than had been supposed, that they exaggerated the significance of the second century calumnies against St. Paul. They forgot that the Clementines were heretical, and that these Ebionite attacks were, after all, subterranean and pseudonymous. As for the *grounds* on which St. Paul is identified with the False Prophet—namely, because in writing to the Romans[1] he taught loyal obedience to the powers that be as being "ordained of God"[2]—Volkmar surely forgets that the teaching of St. Paul on this subject was the normal teaching of all the Apostles, of all

[1] Rom. xiii. 1—7. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14—17.

the early Christian Fathers and Apologists, nay, more, of the Lord Jesus Himself. St. Peter—writing in the days of Nero—writing, in all probability, during the Neronian persecution, had not only said "Honour the king," but even "Submit yourselves unto every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, *whether it be to the king as supreme*, or unto governors, as unto them that are appointed by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." And as to the Divine authority of heathen government, St. John himself records in his Gospel how our Lord said to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, *except it were given thee from above.*"[1] Indeed, such teaching was so obviously based on common sense and common duty, that even after the destruction of Jerusalem—even in the days when detestation of the Gentiles had been reduced to something like a system—Rabbi Chanîna used to say, "Pray for the established government, for, but for it, men would devour each other."[2]

SECTION II.

THE SEALS.

After the letters to the Seven Churches begins the more definitely Apocalyptic portion of the book. The Apostle hears a voice bidding him ascend to heaven, and see things which must come to pass after these things. Instantly, in an ecstasy, he sees a throne in heaven, encircled by an emerald rainbow, whereon was seated One whose lustre was as a jasper and a sardine. Round the throne were twenty-four enthroned elders, representing

[1] John xix. 11. [2] Mechilta on Exod. xix. 1.

the Patriarchs of the redeemed Church of both dispensations, arrayed in white and crowned with gold. Out of the throne came an incessant rolling of thunders and voices, and a stream of lightnings; and before it there burned, as with the flame of seven lamps, the sevenfold Spirit of God. Before the Throne flowed a glassy sea of crystal brightness, and about it were the fourfold cherubim, six-winged and full of eyes, symbols of all that is most perfect in creation, hymning the perpetual Trisagion, and joining in the endless liturgy of prayer and praise. On the right hand of Him who sat on the throne was a book, seven-sealed, and written within and without. In answer to the appeal of an angel none is found worthy to open the book but the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, who is also the Lamb that was slain. When He has taken the book there is a fresh outburst of universal triumph and blessing, in which even those join who are "under the earth."[1]

i. The Lamb opens one of the seven seals, and one of the Immortalities cries with a voice of thunder, "Come!"

Instantly there springs forth a *white* horse, bearing a rider with a bow in his hand, to whom a crown is given, and who goes forth conquering and to conquer. It is a symbol of THE MESSIAH riding forth to victory, but armed only with a bow to smite his enemies, not as yet in close conflict, but from afar.[2]

But the coming of the Messiah was to be ushered

[1] Verse 13, comp. Phil. ii. 10. With the vague numbers of the numberless multitude comp. Dan. vii. 10.

[2] Comp. xix. 11. Both Victorinus, in his commentary, and Tertullian (*de Cor. Mil.* 15) understand the Rider of the White Horse to be Christ. The white horse is a sign of victory (Virg. *Æn.* iii. 537). The symbol of the bow is, perhaps, derived from Pss. vii. 13, xlv. 6.

in by the woes which are the travail-pangs of a new dispensation.

ii. The Lamb opens the Second Seal, and the second Immortality cries "Come!"

Instantly a *fiery* horse—a horse red as blood[1]—leaps forth, whose rider is armed with a great sword. It is the symbol of WAR. To him it is given to take peace from the earth, and that—as in the fierce conflicts between Otho and Vitellius, between Vitellius and Vespasian, between the Jews and the Romans, between John of Giscala and Simon—men should slay one another in internecine and civil discord. It was an epoch of wars and massacres. There had been massacres in Alexandria; massacres at Seleucia; massacres at Jamnia; massacres at Damascus; massacres at Cæsarea; massacres at Bedriacum. There had been wars in Britain, wars in Armenia, wars in Gaul, wars in Italy, wars in Arabia, wars in Parthia, wars in Judea. Disbanded soldiers and marauding troops filled the world with rapine, terror, and massacre. The world was like an Aceldama, or field of blood. The red horse and its rider are but a visible image of the words of our Lord—"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;" and "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, which things are the beginning of the birth-throes."[2]

iii. The Lamb opens the Third Seal, and the third Immortality utters the word "Come!"

Instantly a *black* horse leaps forth. Its rider is

[1] 2 Kings iii. 22, πυρρὰ ὡς αἷμα.

[2] Matt. xxiv. 4, 7. For corroborative authorities see Jos. *Antt.* xviii. 9, § 9; xix. 1, § 2; *B. J.* ii. 17; x. 18 (where he says that "a terrible disturbance prevailed throughout Syria, and every city had been divided into two camps"); Tacitus and Suetonius *passim*.

unarmed, but holds in his hand a balance; and by way of explanation a voice is heard from among the four Immortalities saying, "A chœnix of wheat for a denarius, and three of barley for a denarius." The rider is FAMINE. A chœnix was less than a quart, and was the minimum allowance for a day's food,[1] yet it was to cost a whole day's wages;[2] and a third of the same price was to be given for even so coarse a grain as barley—a food to which Roman soldiers were only degraded by way of punishment. Thus wheat and barley were to rise to twenty times their usual price, to the infinite distress of men.

> "He calls for Famine, and the eager fiend
> Blows poisonous mildew from his shrivelled lips,
> And taints the golden ear."[3]

It was an epoch of constant famines. The dependence of Rome and Italy upon Alexandria for corn caused bitter and constant distress. In the reign of Claudius the famine and its accompanying prodigies had been deemed an omen, and only fifteen days' food had been left in Rome.[4] About this very time, A.D. 68—in the midst of Nero's impotent buffooneries—the people, already burdened by famine prices, were nearly maddened by the discovery that a ship from Alexandria, which had been mistaken for one of the famous wheat-ships, had a lading of sand with which to strew the amphitheatre.[5] The overflow of the Tiber, early in the

[1] Herod. vii. 187; Diog. Laert. viii. 18.

[2] Matt. xx. 2; xxiv. 7; Mark xiii. 7; Tac. *Ann.* i. 1. In Sicily, in the day of Cicero, twelve *chœnixes* of *wheat* could be bought for a denarius (Cic. *Verr.* iii. 81), and therefore thirty-six of barley.

[3] Cowper.

[4] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 43: "frugum egestas et orta ex eo fames." Suet. *Claud.* 18, "*assiduae sterilitates.*" (Comp. Jos. *Antt.* iii. 15, § 3.)

[5] Suet. *Ner.* 46.

reign of Otho, caused, as Tacitus says, famine among the common people, and a scarcity of the commonest elements of life.[1] It was the deliberate object of Vespasian to cause famine and dissensions at Rome by stopping the supplies of provisions, nor did he let the corn-ships sail till only ten days' supply was left in the city.[2] In Jerusalem, during the final state of siege which was now rapidly approaching, the anguish and horror of the famine were unspeakable. Josephus tells us that many sold their all for a single chœnix of wheat if they were rich, of barley if they were poor, and shut themselves up in the inmost recesses of their houses to eat it raw; and that many had to undergo unspeakable tortures to make them confess that they had but one loaf of bread, or so much as a handful of barley meal.[3] Terribly —both in Italy and in Judæa—did the fearful rider of the black horse do his appointed work! He is a visible symbol of the Lord's words—"There shall be famines . . . . in divers places."[4]

But the third Immortality added the strange words, "And the oil and the wine hurt thou not." Oil and wine are not necessaries but luxuries. It is as though he had said, "In the wild anguish of famine let their pangs be aggravated by having the needless accessories of abundance." So it was—strange to say—in both the places on which the Seer's eye is mainly fixed, Jerusalem and Rome. In Jerusalem, while myriads were starving, John of Giscala and his Zealots had access to the sacred stores of *wine and oil* in the Temple, and wasted it with reckless extravagance,[5] and Simon's

[1] Tac. *H.* i. 86: "fames in volgus, inopia quaestus, et penuria alimentorum" (Suet. *Otho*, 8).
[2] Tac. *H.* iii. 48; iv. 52.
[3] Jos. *B. J.* v. 10. § 2.
[4] Matt. xxiv. 7.
[5] Jos. *B. J.* v. 13, § 6; 1, § 4.

followers were even hindered from fighting by their perpetual drunkenness. In Rome immense abundance of wine was a frequent concomitant of extreme scarcity of corn. So marked was the evil, that Domitian endeavoured to secure by edict the diminution of the vinelands, and the devotion of wider areas to the cultivation of cereals for human food.[1]

iv. The Lamb opens the Fourth Seal. The fourth Immortality utters his solemn "Come!"

Instantly a *livid* horse leaps forth. His rider is DEATH; and HADES follows to receive the prey. They usher in a crowd of calamities over a quarter of the earth—sword, and famine, and pestilence, and wild beasts. Sword and famine had done part of their work; pestilence and the increase of wild beasts naturally follow them. God's four sore judgments usually go hand in hand.[2] Christ had already said of these days that there should be famines and pestilences, as well as wars and rumours of wars. Apart from the inevitable prevalence of wild beasts in places where the inhabitants are thinned and weakened by calamity, an incredible number of human beings were yearly sacrificed to wild beasts in the bloody shows of the amphitheatres, not only at Rome but throughout all the provinces. Lions and tigers were literally fed with men.[3] A pestilence at Rome carried off 30,000 in a single year.[4] At Jerusalem there was from these com-

[1] Suet. *Dom.* 7.

[2] Ezek. xiv. 21; Matt. xxiv. 6, 8; Mark xiii. 7, 8.

[3] Hence one of the wild plans of revenge which chased each other across the brain of Nero on his last day of life, was to let loose upon the people the wild beasts of the amphitheatre. Suet. *Ner.* 43: "urbem incendere feris in populum immissis."

[4] Suet. *Ner.* 39; Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 13.

bined causes "a glut of mortality" almost incredible. It was calculated that upwards of a million perished in the siege, and Mannæus, son of Lazarus, told Titus that even before the Romans encamped under the walls, he had seen 115,880 corpses carried through one single gate.[1]

v. The Lamb opens the Fifth Seal.

Immediately under the golden altar of incense before the throne, are seen the souls of the "great multitude" who had perished "for the word of God and for the testimony which they held,"[2] some at Jerusalem, some in the provinces, but most of all in the Neronian persecution at Rome. They are impatiently appealing for vengeance and judgment.[3] Hero after hero had fallen in the Christian warfare. Apostle after Apostle had been sent to his dreadful martyrdom. St. Peter had been crucified; St. Paul beheaded; St. James the Elder beheaded; St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, hurled down and beaten to death; hundreds of others burnt, or tortured, or torn to pieces in the gardens of Nero and in the Roman circus; yet no Deliverer flashed from the morning clouds. How long, oh Lord, how long! When all the world is arrayed against Thy saints, must not deliverance assume the inevitable guise of temporal vengeance?—White robes are given them, and they are bidden to wait till the number of the martyrs is complete, till their brethren who are still on earth

[1] See Jos. *B. J.* v. 12, § 3; 13, § 7.

[2] Rev. vi. 9; vii. 13; xvii. 6; xx. 4.

[3] This has been variously excused by different commentators. "Non haec odio inimicorum," says Bede, "pro quibus in hoc saeculo rogaverunt, orant, sed amore aequitatis." Bengel explains their impatience as zeal for the truth and holiness of the Lord (comp. Ps. lxxiv. 19; Luke xviii. 7, 8).

shall have fulfilled their course.[1] They are those of whom Christ had prophesied when he said "Then"—after the "beginning of sorrows"—"shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you." The time had come for judgment to begin at the throne of God. Meanwhile the fire of olden prophecy was re-kindled for their inspiration, and they found that the more they were trodden down the more did they feel the conviction of glorious triumph, and the exultation of inward peace. They who have an invisible King to sustain them, and a John to utter His messages, may brave the banded forces of secular despotism and religious hatred—and may stand undismayed between a Zealot-maddened Jerusalem and a Neronian Rome. If the judgment began with Christians, what should be the end of those who obeyed not the Gospel of God?[2]

vi. The Lamb opens the Sixth Seal.

Instantly there are all the signs which usher in a Day of the Lord. The darkened sun, the lurid moon, the showers of meteors, the shrivelling heavens, the terror with which men call on the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them, are the metaphors of vast earthly changes and catastrophes. At first sight it might well seem as if they could describe nothing short of the final conflagration and ruin of the globe. But there is not one of these metaphors which is not found in the Old Testament Prophets,[3] and in them

[1] Comp. Enoch civ. 1—3. "Ye righteous, . . . your cries have cried for vengeance . . . *wait with patient hope.*" See too Gen. iv. 10; Job xvi., xix.; Is. xxvi. 21; 2 Esdras xv. 8, etc.

[2] 1 Pet. iv. 17.

[3] See Is. ii. 12, 19; xiii. 10; xxxiv. 3, 4; l. 3; lxiii. 4; Jer. iv. 23—26; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Joel ii. 10, 31; iii. 4, 15; Hos. x. 8; Nah. i. 6; Mal.

they refer in every instance to the destruction of cities and the establishment of new covenants, or to other earthly revolutions. Not only had our Lord adopted these vivid Oriental symbols to describe the signs of His Coming in the fall of Jerusalem, and the close of the old æon, but he had expressly said that "*this generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled.*"[1] It is clear, therefore—as nearly every school of interpreters has seen—that they are but a description, in the language of Eastern poetry and metaphor, of an age terrified alike by political crises and physical calamities. Such a description accords exactly with the reality. In the sudden collapse of the deified line of the Julii, who had governed them for four generations, the Romans saw an omen which seemed to threaten the world with destruction.[2] There reigned everywhere a universal terror.[3] Throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire, but most of all in Judæa, in the midst of the violent revolutionary movements which marked the day, men's hearts were failing them for fear.[4]

vii. Then, before the opening of the Seventh Seal, there is a pause. The Angels of the winds had been bidden to prevent their ravages[5] until the servants of

iii. 2, etc. The extent to which the Apostle borrows the phrases of the Old Testament may be seen by taking Rev. i. 12—17, and comparing it phrase by phrase with Zech. iv. 2; Dan. vii. 13; x. 5; vii. 9; x. 6, 11, 12; Is. xlix. 2; Ezek. xliii. 2.

[1] Matt. xxiv. 29—34. [2] See Tac. *H.* i. 11. [3] Luke xxiii. 36.

[4] Here, if any one believes that the Apocalyptic symbols are infinitely plastic, he may hold with Godet that the seals foreshadow "*all* the wars, *all* the famines, *all* the persecutions, *all* the earthquakes, etc., which the earth has seen or will see until the last scene for which the trumpets give the signal."

[5] Among other things they are forbidden "to hurt *any tree*," vii. 1 (comp. ix. 4). The Jews felt deeply the destruction of all the trees in the

God are sealed upon their foreheads by the Angel from the sunrising. The seal is doubtless the cross of baptism, just as in Ezekiel (ix. 4, 6) those alone are to be spared from slaughter who have "the sign Thau," —that is the cross—upon their foreheads.[1] A purely ideal number are sealed—namely, twelve times twelve thousand—twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes. The tribe of Dan is alone omitted, probably because it had almost disappeared from the annals of Israel.[2] Besides these, the seer beheld an innumerable multitude of every nation, and all tribes and peoples and tongues arrayed in white and with palms in their hands. One of the elders tells him[3] that these are they who came "out of *the* great tribulation"—that is, the Neronian persecution—and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The whole company are "the elect gathered together from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."[4] The 144,000 seem to represent the ideal Israel. The "numberless multitude," which is almost the identical expression used of the Neronian martyrs alike by Tacitus and by Clemens Romanus,[5] are those who have died for the

neighbourhood of Jerusalem during the Jewish war. Rabbi Yochanan said, "The Holy One—blessed be He!—will in future replace every acacia which the heathen have taken away from Jerusalem." He supported this by Is. xli. 19, saying that "the wilderness" (Is. lxiv. 10) was meant to indicate Jerusalem (Rosh Hashanah, f. 23, *a*).

[1] The ancient form of the letter Thau was +

[2] It is not worth while to repeat all the idle conjectures about this point. The Targum of Jonathan on Ex. xvii. 8 represents Dan as "a sinner from the beginning"—a tribe thoroughly idolatrous (see Ewald, *Gesch.* i. 490). Simeon is omitted in Deut. xxxiii., and Dan in 1 Chron. iv. After 1 Chron. xxviii. 22 it is not mentioned. Levi is here counted as one of the tribes, because *all* the Lord's true people are now priests.

[3] Cf. Zech. iv. 4, 5.

[4] Matt. xxiv. 31.

[5] ὄχλος πολὺς, "*ingens multitudo.*"

truth of Christ, whose souls St. John has already seen in shadowy throngs beneath the altar.

viii. We still await in dread expectation the opening of the Seventh Seal. But when it is opened there is a pause of terrified astonishment, a silence for half an hour in Heaven, as though the dwellers in Heaven drew their breath in anguish of expectation. It is like the awful pause before the hurricane, when we hear "the destroying Angels murmuring together as they draw their swords in the distance," and "the questioning in terrified stillness of the forest leaves which way the wind shall come." For hitherto the judgments of the earth have only been seen in Heaven by the shadowy images of those who went forth for their accomplishment; but now are to be seen the very judgments themselves. There are seven Angels[1]—

> "the Seven
> Who in God's presence, nearest to His throne
> Stand ready at command, and are His eyes
> That run through all the Heavens, and down to the earth
> Bear His swift errands."

To these Angels are given seven Trumpets to blow the signals of doom.[2] The results that follow the blast of their seven trumpets practically form the issue of the breaking of the seventh Seal. But the troubles which follow are neither definite, nor continuous, nor rigidly historical. They closely resemble those which have followed at the opening of the sixth Seal, only that these trumpet calamities affect a third, and not a fourth, part

[1] See Tobit xii. 15; Dan. x. 13; Zech. iv. 10. The names are given differently in the Book of Enoch, the Targum of Jonathan, and other sources (see Gfrörer, *Jahrb. d. Heils*, i. 361).

[2] Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 52; 4 Esdr. v. 3; Matt. xxiv. 31.

of the earth.[1] They indicate the widening spread and deepening intensity of judgment; and although it is not possible to point out in chronological sequence the exact events which they describe in hyperbolic symbolism, they resemble those signs in the sun, the moon, the stars, and the sea by which the Lord on the Mount of Olives had shadowed forth the troubles of the approaching end. The language is also coloured by reminiscences of the Plagues of Egypt.[2] Further, it must be borne in mind that to the eye of the seer the outlines of time are indistinct, and there is a commingling of the events of the present and the immediate past with those of the instantly anticipated future. The repetition of the vision of judgment in various forms is one of the recognised Hebrew methods of expressing their certainty. The same general calamities are indicated by diverse symbols. Let it not be supposed that there is anything novel in this view. On the contrary, it is found as far back as the close of the third century, in the most ancient of all the extant Scholia on the Apocalypse—those by St. Victorinus of Pettau, who was martyred in the days of Diocletian.[3] He regards the visions as mainly retrogressive and iterative. "The phials," he says, "are a supplement of what he said of the trumpets. We must not regard the mere order of the statements, for the Holy Spirit, after he has

[1] The "third part" is evidently a general expression, as in Zech. xiii. 9. It probably indicates the Roman Empire (ix. 18; xii. 6).

[2] See Luke xxi. 25.

[3] See Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xx. 14. So too Andreas, Corn. à Lapide, Vitringa, Bengel, and many commentators of all schools, including writers so unlike each other as Bossuet, Ewald, De Wette, and Reuss, on the one hand, and Elliott, Wordsworth, and Hengstenberg, on the other.

advanced to the end of the latest time, often returns to the same time again, and supplies all which was before partially stated." And just before this passage, he says, "that though the seer repeats by the vials (what had been implied by the trumpets) this does not imply a repetition of the fact, but is a twofold statement of a single decreed event." There is fair reason to suppose that Victorinus derived this valuable, and by no means obvious, principle of interpretation from early, and perhaps from Apostolic tradition.

SECTION III.

THE TRUMPETS.

Before the seven Angels sound, another Angel, standing at the altar, mixes abundant incense in a golden censer with the prayers of the saints. Some at least of these prayers are represented as having been a unanimous cry for speedy vengeance. In answer to these, the Angel takes the censer, fills it with fire from the altar, and hurls it upon the earth, which echoes back its crashing fall in thunderings, lightnings, voices, and earthquakes. Such thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes were, according to Tacitus and Suetonius, characteristic of the epoch. I have already quoted the solemn language in which Tacitus summarises the manifold calamities of this very period.[1] Speaking of the day on which Galba adopted Piso —Jan. 10, A.D. 69—he says that the day was foul with rain-storms, and disturbed beyond natural wont with thunders, lightnings, and the *threats of heaven*,"[2]—

[1] Tac. *H.* i. 3. It had long been customary to connect such phenomena with political events (Cic. *De Div.* i. 18; Suet. *Aug.* 94).

[2] Tac. *H.* i. 18.

omens which he blames Galba for neglecting. Speaking a few years earlier, he observes that "never had the storms of lightning flashed with more frequent violence;"[1] and this he mentions among the prodigies which were the indication of imminent calamities. In Asia, where St. John was writing, the era might well be called the era of earthquakes. "Nowhere in the whole world," says Solinus, "are earthquakes so constant and cities so frequently overthrown." They are referred to again and again by all the writers and historians of the age.[2]

i. Then the first Angel sounded. Hail followed, and fire mingled with blood, and a third part of the surface of the earth, with its grass and trees, was scorched up.[3] They are but the beginning of the worse hail (xvi. 21) and fire (xx. 9) and blood (xiv. 20) which are to follow. They point to years of burning drought and rains of blood,[4] and to disastrous conflagrations, such as those at Lyons, Rome, and Jerusalem, and to fierce storms of hail—such as so often destroy in a few hours the vineyards of Lombardy—and to scenes of human bloodshed.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 47.

[2] Dion Cass. lxvi. 23—24; Jos. *Antt.* xv. 5, § 2; *B. J.* i. 19, § 3; iv. 4, § 5; Tac. *Ann.* ii. 47; iv. 13; xii. 43—58; xiv. 27; Sen. *Qu. Nat.* vi. 1; Suet. *Tib.* 74, *Ner.* 20; Juv. *Sat.* vi. 411; *Carm. Sib.* iii. 471; Strabo, xii. 8, § 16, &c. Seneca exclaims, "How often have the cities of Asia, how often those of Achaia, fallen by one shock! How many towns in Syria, how many in Macedonia, have been devoured! . . . . Often have the ruins of whole cities been announced to us" (*Ep.* 91).

[3] See Ex. ix. 22; Joel ii. 3. The reference to the destruction of trees in the Apocalypse may be due to the terrible destruction of the trees and the vegetation of Palestine in the Jewish war, especially round Jerusalem; a destruction from which it has never recovered. The "third part" may, as we have seen, vaguely correspond to the Roman Empire.

[4] Liv. xxxix. 46; and often mentioned among Roman portents. Dion Cassius (lxiii. 26) mentions such a rain in A.D. 68, and says that "the blood"—really a natural phenomena, which happened at Naples so late as 1869—discoloured even the streams.

And we must once more remind the reader that these storms and prodigies, so far from being peculiar to the Apocalypse, or understood in a peculiar significance, are referred to in very similar terms and explained in a very similar way by other Christian, heathen, and Jewish writers. Speaking of the earthquake of A.D. 63, Dion Cassius, reflecting the impression of contemporaries, calls it the "greatest that had ever happened." Can we be surprised if, in a book which reads like a hundredfold reverberation of older prophecies, the contemporary phenomena are depicted in the same imagery as that which had been used in their day by the Prophets of Judah and Israel to describe the calamities which were then happening before their eyes? Is the language of St. John about contemporary calamities anything like so hyperbolical as that in which the Prophet Joel had described the ravages produced by a plague of locusts? It is only to the tamer and colder imagination of Teutonic races that such terms sound hyperbolical if applied to anything short of the final consummation.

ii. The second Angel sounds, and something which resembles a burning mountain is flung down into the sea, and the third part of the sea is turned into blood, and the third part of the fish die, and the third part of the ships is destroyed. The image is original. St. John may have derived this terrific picture of "a burning mountain cast into the sea" either from seeing the lurid flashes that leap up night and day from the cone of Stromboli, which he may have passed in a voyage to Rome, or more probably from seeing on the horizon, as he gazed from Patmos, the dense smoke vomited from the burning island-mountain of Thera, the modern Santorin. The notion of seas and rivers turned into blood

by way of punishing the guilty is well known to the imagery of the Prophets and Apocryphal writers.[1] The language is obviously that of daring symbolism. Taken literally, the fall of the burning mountain resembles no event ever seen or known in the history of the world. Taken metaphorically, it may be meant to depict great calamities connected with the sea and ships, deaths by drowning and massacre which "incarnadined the multitudinous seas." The times of Nero furnished abundant instances. Such were the inundation which devastated the coasts of Lydia, and the destruction of fleets, and the waves reddened with the blood of men, as at Joppa, and on the coasts of the Dead Sea, and on the Lake of Galilee. At Joppa, "the sea was bloody a long way, and the maritime parts were full of dead bodies; and the number of bodies that were thus thrown out of the sea was four thousand two hundred."[2] At Tarichеæ "one might see the Lake of Galilee all bloody, and full of dead bodies . . . and the shores were full of shipwrecks and of dead bodies all swelled, and as the dead bodies were inflamed by the sun they putrefied and corrupted the air, insomuch that the misery was not only an object of commiseration to the Jews, but to those that hated them and had been the authors of that misery . . . and the number of the slain was six thousand five hundred."[3] Considering, however, that in no age of the Church has there been any accepted identification of the scenes thus pictured, it must always remain uncertain whether the seer meant to point to any very *definite* events. His object may have been to express in imaginative emblems broad general circumstances and conditions of warning and judgment.

[1] Wisdom xi. 6, 7. [2] Jos. *B. J.* iii. 9, § 3. [3] Jos. *B. J.* iii. 10, § 9.

iii. The third Angel sounded, and a great star called Absinth "fell upon the third part of the world's waters, and made them so bitter that men died of them." Here again we are in the abstract region of apocalyptical imagination tinged by reminiscences of the Plagues of Egypt. Alike the result and the agency by which it is accomplished are indefinite. As stars are the images of rulers, and fallen stars of rulers flung down from heaven,[1] the symbol may dimly express the bitterness and terror caused by the overthrow of Nero and the ominous failure of the Julian line. The details of the image may have been suggested by the wicked habit of poisoning the waters of which an enemy was to drink. The Romans excused their cruelty at Jerusalem by asserting that the springs and fountains had been poisoned by the Jews.[2]

iv. The fourth Angel sounded, and the third part of the sun and moon and stars, and day and night are smitten;[3] in other words—in accordance with the recognised imagery of Apocalypse and Prophecy—ruler after ruler, chieftain after chieftain of the Roman Empire and the Jewish nation was assassinated and ruined. Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, all died by murder or suicide; Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, Herod Agrippa, and most of the Herodian Princes, together with not a few of the leading High Priests of Jerusalem,

[1] "How art thou fallen from heaven, oh Lucifer, Son of the Morning!" (Is. xiv. 12).

[2] As a specimen of the strange diversities of interpreters, I may mention that Bede understands the fallen star of heretics generally; N. de Lyra applies it to Arius and Macedonius; Luther thinks that it represents——Origen! Mede understands it of Romulus Augustulus; Grotius of "that Egyptian"; Herder of the Zealot Eleazar; others of Gregory the Great!

[3] Matt. xxiv. 29.

perished in disgrace, or in exile, or by violent hands. All these were quenched suns and darkened stars. It must be again borne in mind that all the events thus symbolised are not meant to be *consecutive*. Although progressive, they are analogous to, or even identical with, those already described. The plagues of the trumpets are but the deadlier form of the plagues indicated by the seals; and in the vials the same woes reach their consummation. So far, therefore, as the effects of the fourth Trumpet are meant to be historical, and not a general echo of our Lord's great discourse about the Last Things, they allude, like those of the sixth Seal, to political perils and revolutions in the Roman Empire, which were the special characteristic of that epoch, and of which every comet and every eclipse and every unusual tempest was believed to be a threatening sign.[1]

v. The trumpets are broken into divisions of four and three. To prepare for the remaining three, a single eagle[2] flies in the mid region of Heaven, screaming with loud cry a triple "Woe!" by reason of the Angel trumpets which were yet to sound. The eagle denotes carnage;—"where the slain are there is she."[3] The massacres of these years stained, as we have seen, both the land and sea. The furrows of earth were red with slaughter; the waves were dyed with blood.

The fifth Angel sounds, and a star falls to earth, to whom is given the key of the abyss. He opens the

[1] Stars are the well-understood Scripture symbol for persons in authority (Gen. xxxvii. 9; Jer. iv. 23; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Isa. xiii. 9, 10, 17). The symbol is a natural one. Similarly, Shakspere tells us how—

> "Certain stars shot madly from their spheres
> To hear the sea-maid's music."

[2] Rev. viii. 13. ἑνὸς ἀετοῦ, ℵ, A, B, &c.

[3] Hos. viii. 1.

abyss, and in the issuing smoke which dims the air comes forth a host of scorpion-locusts, which are forbidden to hurt the grass or green things or trees, but are bidden, for a space of five months, to torment without killing all who have not the seal of God on their forehead. These scorpion-locusts resemble war-horses, with crowns like gold, with the face of men, the hair of women, the teeth of lions; they have breastplates as of iron, and the sound of their wings is like the sound of chariots, or of horses charging to battle. The anguish they inflict makes men desire to die;[1] and their king is called Abaddon, Apollyon, or the Destroyer.

The fallen star may again be meant for Nero; but on the whole I agree with those who see in this vision a purely demoniac host. The fallen star will then be Satan, of whom the Lord said, "I saw Satan as lightning fallen from heaven."[2] The abyss is pre-eminently the abode of "demons."[3] It is their speciality to cause torment.[4] They are as appropriately symbolised by scorpion-locusts as by frogs.[5] Christ had specially prophesied that "this wicked generation" should be more grievously afflicted by demons. As time went on, Rome and Jerusalem—the two places typically prominent in the mind of the writer—were becoming more and more "a habitation of demons, a hold of every unclean spirit, a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."[6] In Rome

[1] Jer. iii. 8: "Death shall be chosen rather than life, by all them that remain of this evil family."

[2] Luke x. 18. The Book of Enoch is full of good and evil angels, who are spoken of as stars (Enoch xviii. 13; xxi. 3, &c.).

[3] Luke viii. 31. [4] Matt. xv. 22.

[5] Rev. xvi. 13. Renan may be right in saying that the notion of frogs and locusts coming from the abyss, may have been partly suggested by the actual phenomena of the Solfatara, or some similar district.

[6] Rev. xviii. 2.

the loose, disbanded soldiery and the scum of the forum had degraded society to the lowest levels of infamy. The city had become a foul pool, into which every polluted river had poured its dregs. In Jerusalem, according to the emphatic testimony of Josephus, never since the beginning of the world had there been any generation more prolific of wickedness. Stier says, "that in the period between the Resurrection and the Fall of Jerusalem the Jewish nation acted as if *possessed by seven thousand demons.* The whole age had upon it a stamp of the infernal."[1]

Whether in this general picture of the host of hell swarming out of the abyss, there is any direct allusion to the Idumeans, Zealots, and Sicarii stinging themselves to death with untold anguish, like scorpions encircled by a ring of fire;—or, again, to the tumults, bloodshed, and agonies of Rome, the frequency of suicide, and the many tales of those who seemed to long for death in vain — cannot be affirmed. The description of the scorpion-locusts evidently recalls the Egyptian Plague, and the language of Joel, and the fanciful allusions to locusts which abound in the songs and proverbs of the East.[2] The five months may point to the summer period, which is the time of locust plagues.[3] But two

[1] *Reden Jesu*, ii. 187.

[2] Locusts are called "*cavaletti*" in Naples. Hermas (*Vis.* iv. 1) sees "a great beast . . . . and fiery locusts coming out of his mouth," which appears to be (*Vis.* iv. 3) "the type of the great tribulation which is to come." Compare Claudian's description—

> "Horret apex capitis; medio fera lumina surgunt
> Vertice; cognatus dorso durescit amictus.
> Armavit natura cutem dumique rubentes
> Cuspidibus parvis multos acuere rubores."—(*Epigr.* xxxiii.)

[3] Bochart, *Hierozoic.* ii. 495; Plin. *H. N.* ix. 50: "*latent quinis mensibus.*" If any one desires to see once more the endless guesses of inter-

circumstances seem to show that we are here dealing not with human avengers but with invisible demons of the air. One is that their leader is the Demon Destroyer; the other is that Christians, and Christians only, are expressly exempted from their power to hurt.

vi. Two woes yet remain. A voice is heard from the horns of the golden altar, bidding the sixth Angel loose the four Angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates,[1] who were prepared for the due time, to slay the third part of men. Immediately there ride forth *two hundred million horsemen*, breathing fire and smoke, on lion-headed steeds, armed with breastplates as of fire, jacinth, and brimstone. With their flames and their amphisbæna-stings they slay the third part of men;—and yet the rest do not repent.[2]

It is probable that the facts which loom large and lurid through this blood-red mist of Apocalyptic symbols are the swarms of Orientals who gathered to the destruction of Jerusalem in the train of Titus,[3] and the overwhelming Parthian host which was expected to

preters, I may mention that Bede explains the "five months" of human life, because we have five senses; the scorpions are heretics. Vitringa makes the five months mean 150 years—the time of Gothic domination. Calovius explains them of the prevalence of Arianism. Bengel makes them mean 79½ years—the time of the Jewish afflictions in Persia in the sixth century. Hofmann refers to the five sins; and Züllig to the time of the Deluge (Gen. vii. 24). Some consider that Apollyon meant Napoleon. Bullinger explains the locusts of the monks; Bellarmine of the Protestants; and so on. And this is "*Exegesis!*"

[1] These four bound angels have never been explained. Some refer them to the Angel princes of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes, and Persians. Some to the four Roman stations on the Euphrates. Bound angels would recall to St. John's readers the notion of evil spirits. Comp. Tobit viii. 3; Matt. xii. 43—45.

[2] Et gravis in geminum surgens caput amphisbæna" (Luc. *Phars.* ix. 719).

[3] Jos. *B. J.* iii. 1, § 3; 4, § 2. Four kings—Antiochus, Sohemus,

avenge the ruin of Nero. It was a popular belief that he was still living; that he had taken refuge in the East; or that in any case Tiridates, who greatly admired him, or Vologeses, whose relations with him were very amicable, would bring him back with a whirlwind of triumphant horsemen.[1] These great Eastern Empires took deep and dangerous interest in the affairs of Rome. "Vologeses, King of the Parthians," says Suetonius, "had sent ambassadors to the Senate about the renewal of amity, and earnestly made this further request, that the memory of Nero should be held in honour. In my youth, twenty years after, when a false Nero had arisen, his name was so popular among the Parthians that he was strenuously assisted and with difficulty given up."[2] Both Suetonius and Tacitus relate that Vologeses offered to assist Vespasian with forty thousand mounted archers.[3] One of the circumstances which most deeply aroused the indignation of Titus against the Jews was that they had sent embassies for assistance to their kinsmen beyond the Euphrates.[4] In the *Sibylline Oracles* and in the *Ascension of Isaiah* we find distinct and repeated allusion to some expected catastrophe from the realm of Parthia.[5] The metaphor will then closely re-

Agrippa, and Malchus—contributed archers and horsemen. The latter, who was an Arabian Prince, sent 5,000 archers and 1,000 cavalry.

[1] See Suet. *Nero*, 13, 30, 47, 57; *Carm. Sib.* iv. 119—147; v. 93, and *passim*; viii. 70, &c.

[2] Comp. Tac. *H.* i. 2.

[3] Tac. *H.* iv. 51; Suet. *Vesp.* 6.

[4] Jos. *B. J.* vi. 6, § 2.

[5] "Towards evening war will arise, and the great fugitive of Rome (Nero) will raise the sword, and *with many myriads of men ride through the Euphrates*" (*Carm. Sib.* iv. 116, *seq.*). In the fifth book of Sibylline verses Nero is called "the dread serpent," who though vanished would return, and give himself out as God (*Id.* v. 93, and *passim*). Nero is the "godless king," and murderer of his mother, of the Vision of Isaiah,

semble that of Jer. li. 27, "Cause the horses to come up as *rough caterpillars;* prepare against her the nations with the Kings of the Medes." These vaticinations do not belong in the least to the essence or heart of the Apocalypse. They are but passing illustrations of the great principles—the hopes and warnings—which it was meant to inculcate. Warriors from the Euphrates had their share in the siege of Jerusalem; and though Parthian horsemen did not sweep down from the East at that time against pagan Rome, yet in due time vengeance did fall on her, and in due time the countless hosts which swarmed from beyond the Euphrates may well be said to have destroyed a third of men, and yet to have left the rest impenitent for their crimes.

SECTION IV.

AN EPISODE.

Then follows another pause.

A mighty Angel arrayed with cloud, and with a rainbow encircling a sunlike face, descends from Heaven. His feet are like pillars of fire, and he sets one on the land and one on the sea.[1] A little open book is in his hand, and when he speaks in his lion-voice seven thunders utter their voices. But the seer is forbidden to write, and it is, therefore, absurd

who shall be destroyed after 1,335 days. Jerome, on Dan. i. 28, says that many Christians expected the return of Nero as Antichrist.

[1] Since, in xi. 3, he says, "I will give power to my witnesses," we may perhaps see in this mighty Angel a representation of the Son of God. The descriptions correspond with those of the first (i. 15) and fourth Angel (iv. 3); see too Dan. xii. 1. Nic. de Lyra supposes that the Angel is meant for the Emperor Justinian; Luther, for the Pope; and Bede, for St. John himself! But it is worse than useless to record the vagaries of Apocalyptic interpretation.

to conjecture what they uttered. Then the Angel, lifting his right hand to Heaven, swears by the Almighty Creator that no further time shall intervene, but that, at the trumpet-blast of the seventh Angel, the mystery of God shall be finished.[1] The seer is bidden to take the book and eat it. In his mouth it is sweet as honey; in his belly it is bitter. He is then bidden to prophesy again concerning many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.

This magnificent episode tends to deepen and heighten the expectation of what the seventh Trumpet is to bring. The incident of eating the roll is also found in Ezek. ii. 9; iii. 3,[2] and the command to seal up the "utterance" of the seven thunders resembles those given to Daniel, in Dan. viii. 26; xii. 4—9. The general meaning seems to be that much of the future is to be left in deep mystery, and that the messages yet to be delivered are of mingled import, sweet with consolations, yet bitter with awful judgments. The little book is intended to contain the issues of the seventh Trumpet. They are as yet undeveloped. Much of the vision hitherto has referred to the past. It has explained the meaning of the signs in the physical and political world which pointed to the Coming Judgment. It has made clear to believers that the woes which had shaken and were still shaking the earth were the beginning of the Palingenesia. What the seer has now to foreshadow is the Coming Dawn itself.

[1] This is a reference to vi. 11, where the souls of the martyrs are bidden to rest, "still a little time."

[2] Comp. Jer. xv. 16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." The contents of the roll were sweet in anticipation, because he had hoped to read in them the perfect conversion of Jerusalem; but were bitter when their real import was known.

His first warning prophecies are addressed to the Jews. The judgments of the first six Seals affect the fourth part of all men alike—Christians, Jews, heathens. Before the opening of the seventh Seal, the servants of God—that is, all the members of the Christian Church—are sealed upon their foreheads. The judgments of the first six Trumpets affect, therefore, only the Jews and the heathens. But now, before the actual sounding of the seventh Trumpet, the Jews are won to God (xi. 13). St. John, like St. Paul, sees that it is only "in part" that "blindness hath befallen Israel," and only "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Consequently, the judgments of the first six Vials, though they extend over the whole earth, fall only upon the heathen. The seventh Vial brings upon all the unconverted the final judgment.

So that before the seventh Trumpet sounds the seer is bidden to measure the Temple, and altar, and worshippers with a measuring reed,[1] exclusively of the court which has been given over to the Gentiles, who are to trample down the Holy City for forty-two months—*i.e.*, three and a half years.[2] During these twelve hundred and sixty days, the Two Witnesses are to prophesy in sackcloth. They resemble the two olive trees and the two lamp-stands of the Temple.[3] With fire from their

[1] Ezek. xl.; Zech. iv.

[2] Dan. viii. 13; 1 Macc. iii. 45, 51; iv. 60; Luke xxi. 24. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The period $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, 42 months, or 1,260 days (the half of seven years), is often found in Scripture in connexion with judgments. Dan. vii. 25 (Antiochus Epiphanes rages for "a time, times, and half a time"); ix. 27 (the oblation ceases for half a week); xii. 7, 11; comp. Luke xxi. 24; James v. 17 (time of drought at Elijah's prayer).

[3] Zech. iv. 3, 11.

mouth they can destroy their enemies.[1] They can shut up the Heavens and smite the earth with plague. When their testimony is over, the Wild Beast out of the abyss shall kill them. Their dead bodies shall lie for three and a half days in the streets of Jerusalem, the spiritual Sodom[2] and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. Men of all nations shall rejoice over their corpses,[3] and will not suffer them to be buried.[4] Then the breath of life from God shall enter into them. To the terror of all they shall stand upon their feet,[5] and at the bidding of a voice from Heaven shall ascend in cloud. Then a great earthquake, in which seven thousand shall perish, shall shake down a tenth of the city. The rest of its inhabitants repent in their terror, and give glory to the God of Heaven.

Every item of the symbolism, as will have been seen from the references, is borrowed from ancient prophecy: and yet neither in its details nor in its general import is the vision clear. There neither is nor ever has been in Christendom, in any age, or among any school of interpreters, the smallest agreement, or even approach to an agreement, as to the events which the seer had in view.

What is the object of the measuring? Judging from Ezekiel and Zechariah, we should say that it is for construction and preservation; but in other passages the

[1] 2 Kings i. 10; Jer. v. 14; Ecclus. xlviii. 1. "Then stood up Elias the Prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp."

[2] Jerusalem (Sodom); Isa. i. 10; iii. 9; Jer. xxiii. 14; Ezek. xvi. 48, 49. There may be a passing allusion to the detestable crimes of the Zealots, as recorded by Josephus, *B. J.* iv. 6, § 3.

[3] Congratulations of the enemies of God. Heb. viii. 10, 12; Esth. ix. 19, 22.

[4] 1 Kings xiii. 22; Isa. xiv. 18; Tobit i. 17.

[5] Ezek. xxxvii. 10.

"stretching out of a line," or "setting a plumbline," or "measuring with a line," are emblems of punishment or destruction.[1] As both destruction and preservation follow, the question is not easy to answer.

Again, is the seer now dealing with more or less definite history, whether contemporary or impending, or are the limits of past, present, and future obliterated in illustrating the Divine principles of the Eternal Now?

Again, does the vision refer to the actual Jerusalem, or to Jerusalem as an emblem of the whole Jewish race?

Once more, who are the Two Witnesses? Were there during the siege of Jerusalem, or during the general epoch of its imminent doom, two witnesses for God and for Christ, who in their characteristics recalled Moses and Elijah? Or are Moses and Elijah themselves symbolically described? Was the seer thinking of St. John the Baptist and our Lord?[2] or of the two Christian martyrs, James the son of Zebedee and James the Bishop of Jerusalem? or of two Christian witnesses of whom no history is recorded?[3] or of the murder of men like Zechariah, son of Berachiah? or is he indeed only thinking of Enoch and Elijah,[4] according to the almost unanimous tradition of the early Church?[5] Or, again, widening the symbol of Jerusalem to apply to the whole Jewish and

[1] Lam. ii. 7, 8; Isa. xxxiv. 11; Amos vii. 6, 9; 2 Sam. viii. 2; 2 Kings xxi. 12, 13.

[2] Matt. xvii. 9—13. [3] Compare Rev. xi. 3 with Acts i. 8.

[4] In the Gospel of Nicodemus, Enoch says of himself and Elijah, "We are to live until the end of the world; and *then we are to be sent by God to resist Antichrist, and to be slain by him, and after three days to rise again, and to be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord*" (Gosp. Nicod. ii. 9).

[5] As preserved in the Commentary of Andreas, Bp. of Cæsarea in Cappadocia (comp. Gospel of Nicodemus xxv.). The view derives some sanction from Luke xvi. 31; and the Transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 3.

Christian Church, is he thinking of St. James and St. Peter? or even of St. Peter and St. Paul as the two most illustrious victims of the Neronian persecution? None of these guesses are certain; and perhaps the same may be said of a solution which has sometimes occurred to me, that the Two Witnesses represent Jewish and Gentile converts to the Church. Is the description of their unburied corpses and subsequent ascension a symbol of the true fulfilment of their prophecies, the vindication of the truths they taught, the posthumous honours paid to their memories? Are we to understand the vision literally, or ideally, or allegorically? None can tell us; and who shall say?

Lastly, in the earthquake and the overthrow of a tenth part of the city, and the resultant terror and repentance, are we to see a picture of the anticipated results from the rapidly approaching siege of Jerusalem, or do they shadow forth the fate of the besieged, and the effect of their awful judgment upon the minds of their co-religionists throughout the world?[1]

These questions have never been satisfactorily answered, and perhaps never will be. We must be content to leave them in the half-light in which the uncertainty of nineteen Christian centuries has left them hitherto. There are no two writers of any importance who even approximately agree in the interpretation of the symbols. Those symbols were probably coloured not only by the language of the Old Testament, but by actual events in the siege. Such, for instance, was the terrific storm, the bursts of rain, the earthquake, "the amazing concussions and

[1] Doubtless the imagery is coloured by reminiscences of the events mentioned in Matt. xxvii. 51; xxviii. 2.

bellowings of the earth," during which the Idumeans were admitted, and in which Josephus says that "the whole system of the universe seemed to be in disorder."[1] In the subsequent massacres, the outer Temple—that is, the Court of the Gentiles—"was all overflowed with blood," and eight thousand five hundred corpses lay about its precincts. The insults to the unburied witnesses recall for a moment the fate of the younger Hanan and the priest Jesus, whose bodies were "cast out naked and unburied to be the food of dogs and wild beasts," but whose reputation was so thoroughly vindicated in the eyes of their countrymen, that Josephus pronounces a high eulogy upon them, and attributes the final doom of the city to the guilt incurred by their murderers.[2] The three and a half years, again, correspond with the actual length of the siege, together with the special horrors by which it was preluded. On the other hand, we know of nothing which corresponds to the fall of only the tenth part of the city, or to any repentance on the part of its inhabitants. Every interpretation seems to be beset with insuperable difficulties. No one school of commentators has been more successful than its rivals in furnishing an historical solution. May not this be a sign that no exact historical counterpart to these symbols was contemplated by the seer, and that he is only moving in the region of ideal anticipation in order to use material symbols as the vehicle for eternal principles? He who has learnt the lesson, "not by power nor by might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts;" he who feels that the downfall of Evil and the ultimate triumph of Good has all the certainty of an inevitable law;—he who is waiting for the con-

[1] Jos. *B. J.* iv. 5, § 5. [2] *Ibid.* iv. 5, § 2.

solation of the spiritual Israel and the gathering of all nations into one flock under one shepherd at the Coming of the Lord,—he, it may be, has learnt more of the inner spirit and essential meaning of the Apocalypse than if he followed all the flickering lights of Exegesis which have led men into the marshes of rival fictions from the days of St. Victorinus down to the present time.

It has been often asserted that St. John meant to indicate the preservation of the Temple, in accordance with the general expectation and what was believed to be the express wish of Titus. But he does not say so. The measuring-rod may have been, as we have seen, a mark of coming overthrow. There is indeed an absolutely fatal argument against the notion that St. John anticipated that the Temple would be preserved. It is that our Lord on Olivet, in the very discourse on which the Apocalypse is an expanded and symbolic commentary, had declared without the least ambiguity, and in exact accordance with the result, that of that Temple not one stone should be left upon another. St. John indicates the conversion of the Jews, not the deliverance of Jerusalem.

But all that we cannot understand of St. John's symbolism belongs—the very failure of the Christian world in any age to understand it is a sufficient proof that it belongs—to the secondary, the subordinate, the less essential elements of the book. It must always be more than doubtful whether, in the very small fraction of the book which touches on the yet earthly and historic future, St. John intended to deal with specific vaticinations. At any rate, the meaning and literal accomplishment of such vaticinations is irrevocably

lost for us, and, in point of fact, has never been known to any age of the Church—not even to the earliest, not even—so far as our records go—to Irenæus, the hearer of Polycarp, or to Polycarp, the hearer of St. John. What we *can* see in the whole vision of the Holy City and the Two Witnesses, is a prophecy of the ultimate conversion of the vast mass of Israel, and the final triumph of Christian testimony over every opposing force; further than this, there is nothing to be found in any commentary but fancy and guess-work, and arbitrary combinations, which may seem irrefragable to those who indulge in them, but which have not succeeded in convincing a handful of readers.

Then, at last, the seventh Angel sounds. There is a shout of jubilee in Heaven, because the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. The Jews are now converted. There remains nothing but the judgment of the Gentiles and the Coming of Christ in the close of the æon. The earthly Temple has at last disappeared. In the Heaven is seen the Temple of God, open even to the Holiest Place, to which there may now be universal access at all times, through the blood of Christ.

SECTION V.

THE WILD BEAST FROM THE SEA.

But, as though to compensate for the uncertain idealism of the last Vision, the meaning of the next Vision is retrospective, and, in its main outlines, perfectly clear.

A woman, arrayed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars around

her head, brings forth a man-child. A huge scarlet dragon, with ten horns and seven diademed heads, whose tail sweeps after it the third part of the stars to the earth,[1] stands before her to devour the child the moment it is born, since the child is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. But the child is snatched up to the throne of God, and the woman flies into the wilderness, where she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

All agree as to the interpretation. The star-crowned woman is the ideal Church of Israel.[2] The child she brings forth is a symbol, partly of the Messiah, partly of the Christian Church.[3] The scarlet dragon is an emblem of Satan, with the attributes of the world-power, as specially represented by the Roman Empire—of which a dragon was one of the later insignia. A dragon or serpent (for between the two words there is no real distinction) was also the apt inspirer for an Emperor who was believed to wear as an amulet a serpent's skin, and whose life, according to popular legend, had been saved by a serpent when he was an infant in the cradle.[4] Its seven heads and ten horns are seven Emperors[5] and ten Provincial Governors. But no power of legions, no violence of martyrdoms, can slay the infant Church of

[1] Dan. viii. 10 (of Antiochus Epiphanes).

[2] Isa. lxvi. 7, 8.

[3] The narrative is doubtless coloured by the perils and escapes of the Infant Christ (Matt. ii. 11—15).

[4] Suet. *Ner.* 6.

[5] The "seven" may include Julius Cæsar; or, excluding him, may include Otho. In the days of Julius, however, the name *Imperator* had not acquired its exclusive significance, and he never had the title of Princeps. Apocalyptic symbolism, dealing in mystic numbers, does not greatly trouble itself with these minor details. Thus the seven heads of the Beast serve alike to symbolise seven hills and seven Emperors. The Dragon is at once Satan and the representative of Satan—the Empire of Pagan Rome.

Christ. The Mother Church, the Church of Jerusalem, which, as it were, rocks the cradle of Gentile Christianity, is saved alike from Idumeans, and Zealots, and the Roman armies which advance to besiege the Holy City. She flies to the mountains; to the wilderness; to the secure and desolate region of Pella, in which town, on the edge of the deserts of Arabia,[1] at an early period of the impending siege, the Christians took refuge, in accordance with their Lord's command.[2] They thus escaped the horrors of the three and a half years which elapsed between A.D. 67, when Vespasian began his dreadful work in Judea, and September, A.D. 70, when the city and Temple perished in blood and flame.

The attempts of the dragon are practically foredoomed. Michael and his Angels have warred against him, and flung him down to earth. There is no place for him in Heaven as an accuser of the brethren, because the blood of the Lamb and the blood of the martyrs prevails against him. His great wrath must be confined to earth, and that only for a little time.[3]

He rages against the sun-clad woman, but she escapes from him into the wilderness, with the two great eagle-wings of divine protection.[4] There may have been, and doubtless was, an attempt to pursue and murder the flying Christians. We know that desertion from the city was checked by the most violent

[1] Josephus says of Perea, "its eastern limits *reach* to Arabia" (*B. J.* iii. 3, § 3). Pella is now Tabakât Fahil.

[2] Matt. xxiv. 16; Luke xxi. 21.

[3] Comp. Luke x. 18. "I beheld Satan as lightning fallen from heaven," John xii. 31. "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (comp. 1 John iii. 8).

[4] For eagles' wings as the symbol of the Divine protection, see Ex. xix. 4; Deut. xxxii. 11.

measures. Had any details of the flight to Pella been preserved to us, we should understand what is exactly meant by the dragon vomiting out of his mouth water as a river that she might be swept away, and by the earth helping her and swallowing the river. When Vespasian sent Placidus to chase the Jewish fugitives from Gadara, they were stopped by the swollen waters of the Jordan, and being compelled to hazard a battle, were driven in multitudes into the river, and 15,000 of them perished.[1] It is very probable that some such obstacle may have impeded the flight of the Christians, and that while they were enabled to escape safely by some manifestation of special Providence, many of their pursuers perished in the swollen stream.

The next Vision is not only plain, but must henceforth be regarded as so certain in its significance as to furnish us with a *point de repère* for all Apocalyptic interpretations. It is the Vision of the Wild Beast from the Sea; and beyond all shadow of doubt or uncertainty, the Wild Beast from the Sea is meant as a symbol of the Emperor Nero. Here, at any rate, St. John has neglected no single means by which he could make his meaning clear without deadly peril to himself and the Christian Church.

He describes this Wild Beast by no less than *sixteen* distinctive marks, and then all but tells us in so many words the name of the person whom it is intended to symbolise.

These distinctive marks are as follows:—

1. *It rises from the sea*;—by which is perhaps indicated not only a Western power, and therefore, to a Jew,

[1] Jos. *B. J.* iv. 7, § 5.

a power beyond the sea,[1] but perhaps especially one connected with the sea-washed peninsula of Italy.[2]

2. *It is a Beast like one of Daniel's four Beasts,* but more portentous and formidable. Daniel's four Beasts were the Chaldean lion, the Median bear, the Persian panther, and the Beast of Greek dominion, of which the ten horns represent the ten successors of Alexander,[3] and the little horn represents Antiochus Epiphanes. St. John's Beast being the all-comprehensive Roman power, is a combination of Daniel's Beasts. It is a panther, with bear's feet and a lion's mouth. It has seven heads,[4] which indicate (in the apparently arbitrary but perfectly normal vagueness of Jewish apocalyptic symbolism) both the seven hills of Rome and seven kings.[5] The Beast is a symbol interchangeably of the Roman empire and of the Emperor. In fact, to a greater degree than at any period of history, the two were one. Roman history had dwindled down into a personal drama. The Roman Emperor could say with literal truth, "*L'État c'est moi.*" And a Wild Beast was a Jew's natural symbol either for a Pagan kingdom or for its autocrat. When St. Paul was delivered from Nero, or his representative, he says quite naturally that "he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. iv. 17; comp. Heb. xi. 33). When he is alluding to his struggles with the mob and

[1] In the *Sibylline Oracles* (iii. 176) the beast rises "from the Western sea." In 2 Esdras xi. 1 the Eagle (Rome) comes *from the sea.*

[2] Such is the not improbable conjecture of Ewald. From xvii. 15 we might explain it of "the peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," over which Rome ruled. In Shabbath, f. 56 *b*, we are told that when Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, Gabriel thrust a reed *into the sea*, and of the mud formed an island, on which Rome was built.

[3] The Diadochi, as they were called. See Grote, xii. 362.

[4] Comp. *Orac. Sibyll.* iii. 176, where also the many-headed beast is Rome.

[5] Rev. xvii. 9, 10.

their leaders at Ephesus, he describes it as "fighting with wild beasts" (1 Cor. xv. 32). When Marsyas announced to Agrippa I. the death of Tiberius, he did so in the words, "the *lion* is dead."[1] Princes, as well as kingdoms, had been described under the same symbol by the Old Testament prophets.[2] Esther, in the Jewish legends, was said to have spoken of Xerxes as "the lion." Lactantius speaks of Nero as a *tam mala bestia*.[3] But, besides all these reasons, which made the symbol so easily intelligible, Renan may be right in conjecturing that there was yet another. It was that, on an occasion which was exceptionally infamous even for Nero, he had been *disguised as a wild beast, and in that disguise had been let loose from a cage* and personated the furies of a tiger or panther.[4]

3. This wild beast of Heathen Power *has ten horns*, which represent the ten main provinces of Imperial Rome.[5] It has the power of the dragon—that is, it possesses the Satanic dominion of the "prince of the power of the air."

4. *On each of its heads is the name of blasphemy.* Every one of the seven "kings," however counted, had

[1] Jos. *Ant.* xviii. 6, § 10. [2] Ezek. xix. 1—9.

[3] The Sibyllists call Nero "the Beast." *De Mort. Persec.* 2.

[4] *L'Antéchrist*, p. 175. Suet. *Ner.* 29. I am told that to this day, in the Had Gadyo, which the Jews of Germany use at the Passover, their old persecutors are compared to various animals.

[5] Ten horns, as in Dan. vii. 24. There they are the Diadochi; here the provinces of Italy, Achaia, Asia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, Gaul Britain, Germany (Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, p. 13). The history of this troubled epoch amply justifies the additional touch of description in which, later on, they, in conjunction with the Beast (*i.e.*, the Provincial Governors and Generals, together with the Emperor), hate the harlot (*i.e.*, the City of Rome, and the *Senatus Populusque Romanus*), and devour her flesh, &c. Again and again in the civil disorders Rome was brought by Emperors and Proconsuls to the verge of ruin and despair.

borne the (to Jewish ears) blasphemous surname of Augustus (*Sebastos*, "one to be adored"); had received apotheosis, and been spoken of as *Divus* after his death; had been honoured with statues, adorned with divine attributes; had been saluted with divine titles; and in some instances had been absolutely worshipped, and that in his lifetime, with temples and flamens—especially in the Asiatic provinces.

5. *The diadems are on the horns*, because the Roman Proconsuls, as delegates of the Emperor, enjoy no little share of the Cæsarean autocracy and splendour; but—

6. *The name of blasphemy* (for such is the true reading) *is only on the heads*, because the Emperor alone receives divine honour, and alone bears the daring title of "Augustus."

7. *One of the heads is wounded to death*,[1] *but the deadly wound is healed.* If there could be any doubt that this indicates the violent end, and universally expected return of Nero—or, which is the same thing for prophetic purposes, of one like him—that doubt seems to be removed by the parallel description of the 17th chapter, where we are told that of the seven kings of the mystic Babylon—

8. *The five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come*; *and* "the Beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and is about to come out of the abyss;" "the Beast that was and is not, even he is an eighth, and is of the seven."[2] Can language be more apparently perplexing? Yet its solution is obvious. No explanation worth the name has ever been offered of this enigma except that which makes it turn on the widespread expectation that

[1] Just as the eagle's head (Nero) in 2 Esdras xi. 1, 36.

[2] Rev. xvii. 8, 10, 11. In ver. 8 the true reading is καὶ παρέσται.

Nero was either not really dead, or that, even if dead, he would in some strange way return. Only two or three slaves and people of humble rank had seen his corpse. All of these, except one or two soldiers and a single freedman of Galba, had been his humble adherents. It seemed inconceivable that after a hundred years of absolutism the last of the deified race of Cæsars should thus disappear like foam upon the water. The five kings are Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius (Caligula), Claudius, and Nero. Since the seer is writing in the reign of Galba, the fifth king (Nero) was, and is not; Otho, the seventh king, was not yet come. When he came, which could not be long delayed, for Galba was an old man—he was to reign for a short time, and then was to come the eighth, who, it was expected, would be Nero again, one of the previous seven, and so both the fifth and the eighth. For, strange to say, Nero still lived in the regrets alike of Romans and of Parthians.[1] Since Rome is the great city (xvii. 18), and the ten horns its provincial governors—"kings who had received no kingdom as yet" (xvii. 12)[2]—it seems difficult even to imagine any other explanation of symbols which it is quite clear that the Apostle *meant* to be understood, and which he assumed *would* be understood, since otherwise they would have been useless to his readers. But, after he has thus all but told us in so many words whom he means, the seer continues the hints by which he describes the characteristics of the Beast. He says that—

9. "*All the earth wondered after the Beast.*" In

[1] Suet. *Ner.* 49, 50, 57; Tac. *H.* i. 2, 78; ii. 8; Dion Cassius, lxiv.; and Dio. Chrysost. *Orat.* xxi. 10.

[2] *As yet*—but several of them were to do so in the course of the next few years. This completely disposes of the supposed refutation of

that day men rejoiced in the omnipotence of evil, and did homage to it in its concrete form. The Roman plebs had become "sottish, licentious, gamblers;" and one who was more gigantically sottish than themselves had become their ideal.[1] The best comment on this particular may be found in the description of Tacitus of the manner in which all Rome, from its proudest senators down to its humblest artisans, poured forth along the public ways to receive with acclamations the guilty wretch who was returning from Campania with his hands red with his murdered mother's blood.[2]

10. That the world "*worshipped the dragon, who gave his power to the Beast,*" would be a natural Jewish way of indicating the belief that the Pagan world, when it offered holocausts for its Emperor, was adoring devils for deities.[3]

11. The cries of the world, "*Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him?*" sound like an echo of the shouts "Victories Olympic! victories Pythian! Nero the Hercules! Nero Apollo! Sacred one! The One of the Æon," *i.e.*, unparalleled in all the world! with which Dion Cassius tells us that he was greeted by the myriads of the populace when, with the crowns of his 1800 artistic triumphs, he returned from his insane and degraded perambulation of Greece.

12. "*The mouth speaking great things and blasphemies*" is the mouth which was incessantly uttering the most

the views here maintained on the plea that the Roman Emperors did not wear *diadems*. The ten horns are kingdomless kings (*i.e.*, Provincial Governors), and yet even these *horns* are diademed (xiii. 1).

[1] Maurice, *Revel.* p. 238.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 13. Dion Cass. lxi. 16. Suet. *Ner.* 39.

[3] 1 Cor. x. 20.

monstrous boasts and pretensions,[1] declaring that no one before himself had the least conception of what things an Emperor might do, and of the lengths to which he could go; the mouth which ordered the erection of his own colossus, 120 feet high, adorned with the insignia and attributes of the sun.[2] As for his blasphemies, Suetonius tells us that he was an avowed and even contemptuous atheist—"religionum usquequaque contemptor."[3]

13. "*Power was given him to act*[4] *forty-two months.*" The exact significance of this mystic number, which is also described as 1260 days (xi. 2; xii. 6), and as "a time, times, and half a time" (xii. 14), is variously explained. The simplest explanation is that it refers to the time which elapsed between the beginning of Nero's persecution in Nov., 64, and his death in June, 68, which is almost exactly three and a half years.

14. "*It was given him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them,*" for it was he who began the terrible era of martyrdom, and put "a vast multitude" to death with hideous tortures on a false accusation.[5]

15. "*Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*" Of the representatives of the world-powers in that day, Greece received him with

[1] The "mouth speaking great things" of Antiochus Epiphanes, in Dan. vii. 8, 20, never uttered half such monstrous boasts as that of Nero.

[2] Pliny, *H. N.* xxxix. 7. Suet. *Ner.* 30—32. Dion Cass. lxvi. 15. Mart. *Spectac.* ii. 1, *Ep.* i. 71. It required twenty-four elephants to drag it away in the reign of Hadrian. Spart. *Hadr.* 19.

[3] *Nero*, 56. The first object of his veneration was the Syrian goddess "hanc mox ita sprevit ut urinâ contaminaret."

[4] xiii. 5. ποιῆσαι, can hardly mean "to continue" as in the English version. It must mean "to act," "to do what he will;" and, if so, the addition of ὅ θέλει in ℵ is at least a correct gloss.

[5] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44.

frantic adulation, Parthia was in friendly relations with him, and Armenia, in the person of Tiridates, laid its diadem before his feet.[1] Even Herod the Great, though himself a powerful king, had been accustomed to talk of the "Almighty Romans."

16. All "*the inhabitants of the earth, except the followers of the Lamb, worshipped him.*" This, as we have seen, was literally true of the Emperors, both in their lifetime and after their death. At this dreadful period the cult of the Emperor was almost the only sincere worship which still existed.[2]

Then follow two verses (xiii. 9, 10) which do not bear directly upon the symbol. They are either a prophecy of retribution given for the consolation of the suffering saints,[3] or, if we take what seems on the whole to be the more probable reading, they are a declaration that the saints must indeed suffer, but that their sufferings should be endured in faith and patience.[4]

In these paragraphs, then, we have sixteen hints as to who and what is intended by the Apocalyptic Wild Beast, and it is undeniable that *every one of these directly points to Rome and Nero.* They point *so* directly to Rome and to Nero that it is difficult to conceive how the writer could have expressed his meaning *less* enigmatically, if he adopted at all that well-understood literary method of Jewish Apocalypses which was enigmatical in its very nature.[5] The

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 26; Suet. *Ner.* 13.

[2] See Boissier, *La Religion Romaine*, i. 122—208. Augustus disliked all personal worship, and insisted that his cult should be joined to that of Rome. But Caligula claimed to be worshipped in person (Suet. *Cal.* 21), and Nero received *apotheosis* in his lifetime. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 74.

[3] Perhaps an allusion to Nero's supposed death and flight.

[4] Rev. xiii. 10.

[5] How strange were the symbolic devices of Apocalyptists we see in

most remarkable indication that Nero is mainly intended is that it is exactly in the *most* enigmatical particulars that the resemblance is most close. He was mortally wounded, and yet (according to the then belief, which is here adopted for purposes of description, and which was symbolically though not literally true) the wound was *healed;* and he was a fifth king who was, and is not, and yet (so St. John indicates him by the popular belief) should be once more the eighth king, and one of the seven.[1] If we had not the perfectly simple clue to what was indicated by this strangely riddling description, we might give up the interpretation as insoluble; but the clue is preserved for us, not only by Jewish Talmudists,[2] and Pagan historians and authors, such as Tacitus,[3] Suetonius,[4] Dion Cassius,[5] and Dion Chrysostom;[6] but also by Christian fathers like St. Irenæus,[7] Lactantius,[8] St. Victorinus, Sulpicius Severus,[9] and the Sibylline books;[10] and even by St. Jerome[11] and by St.

the 8th Book of the Sibyllines, where Hadrian is described as "having a name like that of a sea" (the Hadriatic), and is called "the wretched one," because of the resemblance of his name (Ælianus) to the Greek *eleeinos* (*Orac. Sib.* viii. 52, 59).

[1] It was believed that he would return from the *East*, by the aid of Parthians, among whom he was thought to have taken refuge.

[2] The tract Gittin, quoted by Grätz, *Gesch. d. Judenth.* vol. iv. p. 203.

[3] Tac. *Hist.* ii. 8.

[4] Suet. *Ner.* 57, et ibi *Casaubon.*

[5] Dion Cass. Xiphilinus, lxiv. 9. See Zonaras, *Ann.* xi. 15—18. The expectation was most current in Asia Minor, and Nero's thoughts were incessantly turned to the East by astrologers, etc. Tac. *Hist.* ii. 95; *Ann.* xv. 36. Suet. *Ner.* 40—47.

[6] Dion Chrysost. *Orat.* xxi. (i. p. 504, *ed.* Reiske: "Even now all desire him to live, and most persons think that he is still alive.")

[7] Iren. *l.c.*

[8] Lactant. *De Mort. Persec.* 2.

[9] Sulp. Sever. *Hist. Sac.* ii. 28. "It is the current opinion of many that he is yet to come as Antichrist." This was written A.D. 403.

[10] *Sibyll.* v. 33; viii. 71.

[11] Jer. *In Dan.* xi. 28.

Augustine.[1] Nothing can prove more decisively than these references that for four centuries many Christians identified Nero with the Beast. An Eastern kingdom had long been promised to him by soothsayers.[2] The author of the *Ascension of Isaiah* says that Beliar shall descend from the sky in the form of man, an impious king, the murderer of his mother (*i.e.*, in the form of Nero).[3] So, too, Commodianus, in the third century, talks of Nero being raised from the underworld.[4] Nay more, we can appeal to the earliest extant Greek commentary on the Apocalypse—that of Andreas, Bishop of the Cappadocian Cæsarea, who says that "the king of the Romans shall come as Antichrist to destroy" the four kingdoms of Daniel. It would have been strange that the Christian world should have felt any doubt that Nero is intended, if all history did not show the extent to which dogmatic bias—which only resorts to Scripture in order to find there its own ready-made convictions—has dominated for centuries over simple and straightforward exegesis. But as though to exclude *any possibility of doubt* about the matter, St. John, after all these clear indications, has all but told us in express words the name of the man whom he means by his Antichrist and Wild Beast—by this deified yet slain and to-be-resuscitated murderer of the saints. He does so in the last verses of the chapter. They furnish a *seventeenth* detail, in which the indications of the seer point immediately and distinctly to the worst of the Roman Emperors.

[1] Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xx. 19, 3. "Unde nonnulli ipsum (Neronem) resurrecturum et futurum Antichristum suspicantur, alii *vero nec occisum putant* sed subtractum potius."

[2] Suet. *Ner.* 40. [3] *Ascens. Is.* iv. 2—14. [4] Commodian. *Instr.* 41.

17. "Here is wisdom," he says (chap. xiii. 18); or, as he expresses it in chap. xvii. 9, "wisdom is needed to grasp the meaning of my symbol;" or, perhaps, as Ewald understands it, "this is the sense,—whoever has wisdom will understand it thus." "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast; for *it is the number of a man*." In other words, he tells us that he now intends to *indicate numerically* the name which he dared not actually express. A Jew or Jewish Christian would at once be aware that he now intends to give an instance of one of the forms of that Kabbalistic method, of which traces are found even in the ancient prophets, and which was known to the Rabbis as *Gematria, i.e.*, Geometry, or the numerical indication of names.[1] Gentile Christians were not so familiar with this method;[2] but we see from Irenæus that they could easily have got the general clue from their Judaic

[1] For an account of Gematria, and numerous illustrations of it, I may refer to my paper on Rabbinic Exegesis in the *Expositor* for 1877, vol. v. Similarly among Egyptian mystics the God *Thouth* was spoken of by the cypher 1218. On the Gnostic gems the word Abraxas is used as isopsephic to Meithras (the Sun) because the letters of both names = 325.

[2] It was, however, by no means unknown to educated Greeks under the name of *isopsephia*. For instance, they called verses *isopsephics* when their letters made up numerically the same sum. In the Anthology we find an epigram which begins—

"One, hearing the words Demagoras and Plague (Loimos), which are of equal numerical value"—

which he could test in a moment, since, in Greek letters, Demagoras is—

$$4 + 1 + 40 + 1 + 3 + 70 + 100 + 1 + 200 = 420$$
Δ A M A Γ O P A Σ

and Loimos (Plague) is—

$$30 + 70 + 10 + 40 + 70 + 200 = 420$$
Λ O I M O Σ

There are isopsephic inscriptions in the *Corpus Inscr. Græc.* 3544—3546. (*See* Aul. Gell. xiv. 14.)

brethren, to whom the Apocalypse is mainly addressed.[1] There was not much danger of a secret being betrayed which might cost the life of any one who mentioned it, and at the same time imperil the whole community. What St. John says in effect is: "I shall now give you the name of the Wild Beast in its *numerical value*. You have heard many specimens of this method, so that you can apply it in this instance, though I warn you that it may give you some difficulty." He evidently *intended* some of them to find out the number of the Beast, which was also the number of a man, while he pointed out that there was *one* unexpected element in the particular solution. If it had been merely a name in the numerical value of its *Greek* letters there would have been so little difficulty about it that any ordinarily educated reader might have discovered it after a few trials. He would only have to find out what living men there were who had the dozen or more attributes which the seer had given to the Beast, and whose names, counted by the value of the letters, made up the number of 666. As there was scarcely *any* other living person to whom the Apocalyptic description could apply, Nero's was probably the first name which a Jewish Christian reader would have tried. And here he would have been at once baffled. In Greek letters he would have found that *Nerōn* made 50 + 5 + 100 + 800 + 50 = 1005. If he tried Neron

[1] The Sibyllist describes Nero as the Emperor whose sign is 50, "*a fearful serpent who shall cause a grievous war.*" N, the initial letter of Nero, = 50. I have already referred to the fancy of Barnabas about Abraham's 318 servants as represented by IHT, and so a sort of symbol of Jesus on the Cross. Similarly in Tertullian (*Carm. adv. Marc.* iii. 4), the victory of Gideon's 300 is connected with the fact that 300 = T, the sign of the Cross: "Hoc etiam signo praedonum stravit acervos."

Kaisar, it would only make 1005 + 332 = 1337. Almost every combination which he tried would fail, and very possibly he would give up the task in despair, with the thought that he did not possess the requisite "wisdom," though he may have solved many such problems in Sibylline or similar books. Thus, in the Sibylline books, the poet indicates the name Jesus, in Greek Ἰησοῦς, by saying that it is a word which has 4 vowels and 2 consonants, and that the whole number is equivalent to 8 units, 8 tens, 8 hundreds, *i.e.* 888 (Ἰησοῦς = 10 + 8 + 200 + 70 + 400 + 200 = 888), and no Greek-speaking Christian would have had any trouble in solving the riddle. Since, however, all the other indications pointed so clearly to Rome and Nero, the Greek Christian reader might very naturally have hit upon "Latinus" (Λατεινὸς = 30 + 1 + 300 + 5 + 10 + 50 + 70 + 200 = 666) as a sort of general indication of Rome and "a Latin man." This accounts for the prevalence of this explanation among the Fathers, beginning with St. Irenæus, who may have heard it from St. Polycarp, who had seen St. John in his old age.[1] These early Christian writers were, so to speak, on the right track; yet with "Latinus" they could hardly have been quite satisfied. It is a vague adjective, and the names *Latium* and *Latinus* had long been practically obsolete. If this were indeed the solution, they might have put down its vagueness to intentional obscurity. We can hardly conceive what care a Jewish writer had to take if he touched in any respect unfavourably upon the imperial power in those days of *delators* and *laesa majestas*.[2] Josephus was in high favour, first with Poppæa and

[1] Iren. *Adv. Haer.* v. 30. Hippolyt. *De Christo*, p. 26.

[2] See Tac. *Ann.* iii. 38; iv. 50; *Hist.* i. 77. Suet. *Ner.* 32:—"tum ut

then with the Flavian dynasty; at Rome he was so great and influential that he probably had the honour of a statue in the imperial city:[1]—yet he stops abruptly in his explanation of the prophecies of Daniel, with a mysterious hint that he does not deem it prudent to say more.[2] This evidently was because he feared that, if he touched on any explanation of the work of destruction wrought by the "stone cut without hands," he might seem to be threatening future ruin and extinction to the Roman empire; and to do this went beyond his very limited daring. It was perhaps the complete unsatisfactoriness of the solution "*Lateinos*" which made some Christians, as Irenæus further tells us, try the name *Teitan*, which also gives the mystic number 666 (*Teitan* = 300 + 5 + 10 + 300 + 1 + 50 = 666), and which has the additional advantage of being a word of six letters. In this instance also ingenuity was not very far astray; for Titan was one of the old poetic names of the Sun, and the Sun was the deity whose attributes Nero most affected, as all the world was able to judge from seeing his colossus with radiated head, of which the substructure of the base still remains close by the ruins of the Colosseum.[3] The mob which greeted him with shouts of "Nero-Apollo!" were well aware that he had a predilection for this title.

On the whole, however, the Greek Christians must have remained a little perplexed, a little dissatisfied,

lege majestatis, facta dictaque omnia, quibus modo delator non deesset tenerentur."

[1] Juv. *Sat.* i. 130.

[2] Jos. *Antt.* x. 10, § 4: "Daniel did also declare the meaning of the stone to the king; *but I do not think proper to relate it.*"

[3] What was meant by the guess *Euanthas* is uncertain. Could it be an allusion to the "aurea caesaries" which grew down over Nero's neck?

and must have been inclined to say, with some of the Fathers,[1] that only time could reveal the secret; or else to believe that perhaps there was more than one solution. They must, however, have known what was *meant*, even if the exact equi-numeration of any words which they could hit upon did not entirely satisfy them. And this was the general condition in which the secret remained in the early Christian Church. At any rate there stood the strange number before them.

χξς'

The very look of it was awful. The first letter was the initial letter of the name of Christ. The last letter was the first double-letter (*st*) of the Cross (*st*auros). Between the two the Serpent stood confessed with its writhing sign and hissing sound.[2] The whole formed a triple repetition of 6, the essential number of toil and imperfection; and this numerical symbol of the Antichrist, 666, stood in terrible opposition to 888—the three perfect 8's of the name of Jesus.

But Jewish readers, and, as we have said, it was to Jewish readers that the Apocalypse was primarily addressed, would find none of the difficulties which perplexed their Gentile fellow-Christians. The Apostle had warned them that the solution did not lie so much on the surface as was usual in similar enigmas. Every Jewish reader, of course, saw that the Beast was a symbol for Nero.[3] And both Jews and Chris-

[1] Irenæus, v. 30.

[2] Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2.

[3] The Sibyllists had already spoken of Caligula as Beliar (*Carm.* iii. 63), and as a serpent. The stories of the serpent which had crawled from Nero's cradle, and of his serpent-amulet (v. *supra*, p. 279) would add significance to the symbolism.

tians regarded Nero as also having close affinities with the serpent or dragon. That Nero was intended would be as clear to a Jew as that Babylon meant Rome, though Rome is never mentioned. He would not try the name Nero Cæsar in Latin, because *isopsephia* (which the Jew called *Gematria*) was almost unknown among the Romans, and their alphabetic numeration was wholly defective. He might try *Νέρων Καῖσαρ* in Greek, but it would not give him the right number. Then, as with a flash of intuition, it would occur to him to try the name *in Hebrew*.[1] The Apostle was writing as a Hebrew, was evidently thinking as a Hebrew.[2] His solœcistic Greek was sufficient to prove that the language was unfamiliar to him, and that all persons of whom he thought would primarily present themselves to his mind by their Hebrew designations. This, too, would render the cryptograph additionally secure against the prying inquisition of treacherous Pagan informers. It would have been to the last degree perilous to make the secret *too* clear. Accordingly, the Jewish Christian would have tried the name as he *thought* of the name—that is *in Hebrew letters*. And the moment that he did this the secret stood revealed. No Jew ever thought of Nero except as "*Neron Kesar*," and this gives at once—נרון קסר = 50 + 200 + 6 + 50 + 100 + 60 + 200 = 666.[3]

[1] I am not sure that a Jew would not have tried Hebrew letters at once. A Talmudic scholar wrote to tell me that my number for Rome (*supra*, p. 220) was wrong, because he had tried it in Hebrew letters. It had not occurred to him to try it in Greek letters!

[2] See the startling Hebraism in the Greek of Rev. i. 4, and comp. Rev. ix. 11; xvi. 16.

[3] The name was so written in Jewish inscriptions. See Ewald, *Die Johann. Schriften*, ii. 203; Buxtorf. *Lex. Rabbin. s. v.* The name Cæsarea appears in the Talmud as קסרין. Renan mentions the remarkable fact that the name for the Antichrist in Armenian is *Neren* (ii. 23). Ewald

Jewish Christians were familiar with enigmas of this kind. They occur even in the ancient Prophets after the days of Jeremiah, and are found in the Old Testament Scriptures.[1] The Jewish Christians could not have hesitated for a moment in the conclusion that in the Hebrew name of Nero the solution of the riddle stood revealed. The Jews were remarkable for reticence, and men are specially liable to keep their secrets to themselves when they involve matters of life and death. Many methods and secrets of Rabbinic exegesis, though of great value, have remained unrevealed by Jews to Christians, simply because the jealous exclusiveness and haughty prejudice of that singular race—feelings which, it must be confessed, have been due in no small degree to the brutality of their enemies—makes them indifferent to the religious views of others. It is, therefore, by no means remarkable that the Asiatic Judaists, who first read St. John's Apocalypse, did not betray what they must have recognised to be the name which exactly corresponded with the number of the Beast. They might be pardoned if they were reluctant to place their lives and the very

found that Josippon writes the name קסר. The secret has been almost simultaneously re-discovered of late years by Fritzsche in Halle, by Benary in Berlin, by Reuss in Strasbourg, and by Hitzig in Heidelberg. See Bleek, *Vorlesungen*, 292 ff.; Krenkel, *Der Apostel Johannes*, 88; Volkmar, *Offenbarung*, 18 and 214. Ewald was only prevented from making the discovery in 1828 by the assumption, which he afterwards found to be erroneous, that Cæsar must be spelt in Hebrew with a *yod*. He therefore conjectured "Cæsar of Rome" (קיסר רום) (*Johann. Schrift.* ii. 263).

[1] Thus in Jerem. li. 41, "Sheshach" stands for "Babel," by the transmutation of letters known as Atbash (a subspecies of what the Rabbis call *Themourah* or "change"); and in li. 1, "*they that dwell in the midst of them*," means the Chaldæans (*lebh kamai* = *Kasdim*); and in Isa. vii. 6, Tabeal, by another sort of Themourah, gives us the name of Remaliah. See my Paper in the *Expositor*, v. 375.

existence of their churches at the mercy of Gentile brethren, of whose prudence and fidelity they could not in every instance be perfectly secure. Enough, however, may have escaped them to put others in the right direction; and, as far as the *general* understanding of the Apostle's meaning was concerned, it mattered very little whether the guessed solution was *Lateinos*, or *Teitan*, or *Neron Kesar*, since all three words were but varying forms of the same essential thing. All the earliest Christian writers on the Apocalypse, from Irenæus down to Victorinus of Pettau[1] and Commodian in the fourth, and Andreas[2] in the fifth, and St. Beatus in the eighth century, connect Nero, or some Roman Emperor, with the Apocalyptic Beast.

If any confirmation could possibly be wanting to this conclusion, we find it in the curious fact recorded by Irenæus, that, in some copies, he found the reading 616. Now this change can hardly have been due to *carelessness*. The letters χξς΄ were so singular, even in their external form, that no one could have been likely to alter them into χις΄ or 616.[3] But if the above solution be correct, this remarkable and ancient variation is at once explained and accounted for. A Jewish Christian, trying his Hebrew solution, which would (as he knew) defend the interpretation from dangerous Gentiles, may have been puzzled by the *n* in Neron Kesar. Although

[1] "Hunc ergo—*sc.* Neronem—suscitatum Deus mittet regem dignum dignis et *Christum qualem* meruerunt Judaei" (Vict. Pett. *in Apoc.* xiii.).

[2] ὃν κρατήσει ὁ Ἀντίχριστος ὡς Ρωμαίων βασιλεὺς ἐλευσόμενος (Andr.).

[3] ἑξήκοντα δέκα ἕξ, is the reading of the Codex Ephraemi. Irenæus appeals for the correctness of the reading 666 not only to all the good and ancient MSS., but to the direct testimony of those who had seen St. John (μαρτυρούντων αὐτῶν ἐκείνων τῶν κατ' ὄψιν τὸν Ἰωάννην ἑωρακότων).

the name was so written in Hebrew, he knew that to Romans, and Gentiles generally, the name was always Nero Cæsar, not Neron. But Nero Kesar in Hebrew, omitting the final *n*, gave 616, not 666; and he may have altered the reading because he imagined that, in an unimportant particular, it made the solution more suitable and easy.

One objection will at once be made to this solution. Nero, it will be said, never did return. The belief in his return, though it showed an obstinate vitality, was a mere chimæra. St. John could not have enshrined in his Apocalypse what turned out to be but a popular mistake.

Such an objection is entitled to respect, but it imports *a priori* considerations into a plain matter of exegesis. This belief about Nero's return *did* prevail in the Christian, no less than in the Pagan, world. It is found again and again in the Sibylline books, and in later Christian writers. In the Pagan world it led to the success of more than one false Nero. It is probable that one of these was making himself extremely formidable in the very region in which St. John was writing, and at that very time.[1] In the Christian world the belief was still existent three centuries later, that Nero would return in person as the future Antichrist. The vividness of the contemporary belief must be measured by its extraordinary permanence.

We have no right, then, to frame our interpretation of Scripture by our theories respecting the character and limits of how it ought to be written. Our duty is, on the contrary, to discover its interpretation, and to be guided by this to the true theory of its claims.

[1] Tac. *H.* i. 2; ii. 8; Suet. *Ner.* 57; Zonaras, xi. 15, 18, &c.

When we study the meaning of a passage, our sole and our solemn aim should be to get at the real meaning, and not to repudiate or to gloss over that meaning in obedience to subjective convictions. We should not conceal from ourselves that to *get rid of* a plain explanation because it does not at once fall in with our ready-made dogmas is a dishonesty which, in the language of the Book of Job, is a form of "lying for God." God's own rebuke to Job's three friends was meant to teach mankind for ever that truth and charity are infinitely more sacred than either conventional orthodoxy or traditional exegesis.

In reality, however, this question is not one which in any way affects the dignity of revelation. St. John uses the common belief, as he might have used any other contemporary fact, or any other contemporary notion, merely to help him in the elaboration of his symbol, and to enable him to point out the person whom he is describing. The arrangement of the symbolism affects in no wise the truth of the great *principles* which he reveals. The Divine hopes and consolations of which the Apocalypse is full, the priceless lessons in which it abounds, are not in the slightest degree affected by the circumstance that he depicts the Neronian Wild Beast in the colours which every other historian, whether secular or sacred, would have used for his delineation.

But farther, be it observed that, even if this detail of Nero's personal return had been meant to be in any way essential to the general prediction, it was, with singular exactness, symbolically fulfilled. Although Nero had not (as was popularly supposed) taken refuge among the Parthians, and never was restored by their aid, as was the common expectation of that day, yet such an

anticipation is not directly involved in the Apocalypse, and in any case does not belong to its essential meaning. Every successive Antichrist has shown the Neronian characteristics. If the prophecy of the return of Elijah the Prophet was adequately fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist, the prophecy of the returning Nero was adequately fulfilled in Domitian, in Decius, in Diocletian, in many a subsequent persecutor of the saints of God. Allegory is only susceptible of allegoric interpretation; and in the person of Domitian, as we shall see further on,[1] the prophecy of Antichrist in the person of *Nero redivivus* may be regarded as having been almost literally, and in every sense symbolically, fulfilled. I am well aware that even recent English commentators have done their best to treat this view of the Apocalypse with suspicion and contempt, to treat it as unworthy of their modern theory of "verbal dictation." Let them beware lest in so doing they be haply found to fight against God, and lest, in their attempts to force upon Christendom their private interpretations of prophecy, they only succeed in bringing all prophecy into suspicion and contempt.[2]

SECTION VI.

THE SECOND BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET.

But if Nero be the Wild Beast from the sea, who is the Wild Beast from the land? If Nero be, in the parallel passages, the death-wounded yet unslain *head* of the Beast, who is the False Prophet which wrought the signs before him?

Our great difficulty in answering this question rises

[1] See *infra*, pp. 315, 316.

[2] See some wise remarks of Ewald, *Johann. Schrift.* ii. 15.

from the fact that not the lightest breath of tradition upon the subject has been preserved in the first two centuries. The earliest suggestion is furnished by Victorinus at the close of the third. All commentators alike, Præterist, Futurist, Continuous-Historical, and Allegorical, with all their subdivisions, have here been reduced to manifest perplexity, and have been forced to content themselves with explanations which do violence to one or more of the indications by which we must be guided.

What are those indications?

They are mainly given in Rev. xiii. 11—17, and are as follows:—

1. I saw another wild beast coming up out of the earth.

2. And he had two horns like unto a lamb.

3. And he spake as a dragon.

4. And he exercised all the authority of the first Beast in his sight.

5. And he maketh the earth to worship the first Beast whose death-stroke was healed.

6. And he doeth great signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the Beast, that he should even make fire to come down from heaven upon the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the Beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the Beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived.

7. He gives breath to the image of the Beast, and makes it speak.

8. He causes the execution of those who will not worship the image of the Beast.

9. He makes men of all ranks and classes receive a stamp on their right hand or their forehead.

10. He prevents all who have not the mark of the Beast (his name and the number of his name) from buying and selling.

The only additional clue is that in the parallel description of Rev. xix. 20 he is described under another aspect as "the False Prophet that wrought the signs in the sight of the Beast wherewith he deceived those that had received his mark and worshipped his image."

Now in trying to discover the meaning of the symbol, we may again pass over the countless idle guesses of those who have endeavoured to torture the Apocalypse into a prediction of the details of all subsequent Christian history. With these guesses we are not concerned. They have, as a rule, only been adopted by the individual commentators who suggested them. Nothing, we may be sure, was further from the mind of the writer than a desire to gratify the fantastic curiosity of eighteen centuries of Christians as to events yet future which they have been always unable to foresee, or even subsequently to recognise. The resemblance of Nero to Antiochus Epiphanes as the personification of savage enmity to the people of God in the book of Daniel, is enough to suggest the certainty that in the case of the second Beast, as in the case of the first, the seer has primarily in view some contemporary person or phenomenon.

Setting aside many conjectures, which I have fully examined elsewhere,[1] that the second Beast is meant for Balbillus of Ephesus, or Tiberius Alexander, or Josephus, or Gessius Florus, three conjectures alone

[1] In the *Expositor*, for Sept. 1881.

seem to me to be worthy of special consideration :—

I. One is suggested by Victorinus of Pettau (A.D. 303). He thinks that by this Wild Beast and False Prophet is meant the Roman Augurial system.

There is in this suggestion much probability, and we may point out in passing that Victorinus in the third century, no less than Irenæus in the second, saw that the Apocalypse moved in the plane of contemporary events. The early mention of this solution may have been due to some echo of still more ancient tradition. Certain it is that, in appearing to identify the second Beast with the "False Prophet" (xvi. 13; xix. 20; xx. 10), St. John lends some sanction to this view. The influence exercised by *Chaldæans, Mathematici, Astrologers, Magi, Augurs, Medici, Prophets, Casters of Horoscopes, Sorcerers, Dream-interpreters, Sibyllists*[1]—Oriental charlatans of every description, from Apollonius of Tyana and Alexander of Abonoteichos down to Peregrinus—is a phenomenon which constantly meets us in the Age of the Cæsars. They appeared in Rome more than two centuries before Christ. Ennius mentions them with contempt.[2] As early as B.C. 139, they had been ordered to quit Italy in ten days. In B.C. 33 they had again been banished by the Ædile M. Agrippa. Augustus and Tiberius had also directed severe edicts against them.[3] But they held their ground.[4] Tacitus calls the edict of Claudius "severe and ineffectual." We see,

[1] Σιβυλλισταί. Plutarch, *Marius*, 42. See Tac. *Ann.* xii. 52; *Hist.* i. 22; ii. 62; Suet. *Tib.* 36, *Vitell.* 14; Juv. *Sat.* vi. 542.

[2] Cic. *De Div.* i. 58.

[3] See Val. Max. i. 3; Dion Cass. xlix. 1; Tac. *Ann.* ii. 27, 32; iii. 22; iv. 58; vi. 20.

[4] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 52.

both from Tacitus and from the anecdotage of Suetonius, that almost every Emperor felt and indulged in some curiosity about these divinations. Tiberius reckoned the "Chaldæan" Thrasyllus among his intimate friends.[1] Poppæa, the wife of Nero, had "many" of them in her household.[2] Nero had his Balbillus;[3] Otho his Ptolomæus;[4] Vespasian his Seleucus;[5] Domitian his Ascletarion.[6] Agrippina depended on Chaldæans for the favourable hour of Nero's usurpation.[7] There is scarcely one of all the Emperors whose history had not some connexion or other with auguries, prophecies, and dreams.[8] In the reign of Nero these prognosticators were brought into special prominence,[9] because the restless and tortured conscience of the Antichrist was constantly seeking to pry into futurity. It is remarkable that they especially encouraged his Oriental dreams, and that some of them even went as far as to promise him the empire of Jerusalem.

It has, however, been generally felt that the institution of Prophets was not so prominent even in Nero's reign as to admit of our applying to it the ten definite indications of the Apocalyptic seer. False prophets were hardly in any sense a *delegate* and *alter ego* of the Emperor. There is at least a probability that as one person is specially pointed to by the symbol of the Beast, so one person is intended by his False Prophet.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* vi. 21.
[2] Tac. *Hist.* i. 22.
[3] Suet. *Nero*, 36.
[4] Suet. *Otho*, 4; Tac. *Hist.* i. 22, 23.
[5] Tac. *Hist.* ii. 8.
[6] Suet. *Domit.* 15.
[7] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 68.
[8] Suet. *Jul. Caesar*, vii. 61; *Octav.* 94; *Tiber.* 16; *Calig.* 57; *Otho*, 4; *Titus*, ii. 9; *Domit.* xiv. 16. For Nero, see Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 9.
[9] Suet. *Ner.* 34, 36, 40. Plin. *H. N.* xxx. 2.

II. More, on the whole, is to be said in favour of the view that the Second Beast, or False Prophet, is SIMON MAGUS. In one direction he corresponds with remarkable closeness to the symbols. His baptism gave him a certain lamb-like semblance to Christianity, while his gross deceptions were the voice of the serpent. Christian tradition, which may well be founded on facts, has much to say about his pretended miracles, and two classes of those miracles are of the very character here indicated. It is said, for instance, that the Second Beast makes fire come down upon the earth. Now among the miracles of Simon we are told that one was to appear clothed in flame.[1] It is said that the Second Beast animates an image of the Beast, and Simon is expressly said to have made statues move, so that he may well have also pretended to make them speak.[2] If he attempted this imposture at all he is more likely to have applied it to the statue of the Emperor—"the image of the Beast"—than to any other. All that would have been needed was a little machinery and a little ventriloquism. If the Middle Ages were deceived by winking Madonnas and glaring crucifixes it must have been equally easy to delude the Roman mob by moving statues. Further, it was at Rome that Simon displayed his magic powers, and they are said to have been exercised with the immediate object of winning influence over Nero. In this the legend declares that he entirely succeeded, and that his influence was

[1] Arnobius (*Adv. Gent.* ii. 12) speaks of Simon being precipitated from a fiery chariot. Augustine (*Haer.* i.) says that he professed to have come to the Apostles in fiery tongues. Nicephorus says that he pretended to pass through fire unhurt.

[2] Clem. *Recogn.* iii. 47. "I have made statues move about."

wielded to induce the Emperor to persecute and massacre the Christians. These features appear not in one, but in many authors,[1] and though the sources from which we now derive this information are exceedingly dubious, there is nothing improbable in the supposition that Simon Magus did find his way to Rome—the reservoir, as Tacitus says, into which all things infamous and shameful flowed[2]—and did there endeavour to win dupes by the same magical arts which had gained him so many votaries among the simple Samaritans.[3] If we suppose that he dazzled the mind of Nero, and that he was one of those men of Jewish race, who, with Aliturus and Josephus, taught Nero and his servants to discriminate between Jews and Christians, and to martyr the latter while they honoured the former, then in Simon Magus the Second Beast of the Apocalypse—especially in the attributes of a False Prophet—would stand revealed. It is true that the Pagan historians are silent about him and his doings; but the events themselves had no political significance, and lay outside their sphere. They belong to the history of the Church not of the State.[4] And Victorinus seems to be referring to Simon Magus when, with reference to the

[1] Justin Mart. *Apol.* ii. p. 69; Tertull. *De Anim.* 34; *De Praescr. Haer.* 37; Sulp. Sev. *Hist. Sacr.* ii. 42; Clem. *Hom.* ii. 34; iv. 4; *Recogn.* ii. 9; iii. 47, 57; *Constt. Apost.* vi. 9; Epiphan. *Haer.* xxi. 5; Arnob. *Adv. Gentes*, ii. 12; Ambros. *Hexaem.* iv. 8, § 33; Cyrill. *Catech.* 6; Ps. Egesipp. *De excidio Hieros.*; August. *Serm.* iii. de SS. Petro et Paulo; Nicephorus Callistus, *H. E.* ii. 27.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 46; v. *supra*, vol. i. p. 116.

[3] Acts viii. 11.

[4] I have already mentioned that Justin's mistake about a statue to him as a god was dispelled in 1574, when the inscription to the Sabine god, Semo Sancus was found in the place which he mentions; v. *supra*, vol. i. p. 115.

signs wrought by the False Prophet, he says that "the *Magi* do these things even to this day by the help of the banished Angels."

III. We now pass from what may be called the ecclesiastical and the religious fields of conjecture to the political. It must be remembered that it is as it were only by an afterthought that the Second Beast is called the False Prophet. May we not look for him in another region of Roman life?

There is, I think, much to be said in favour of Hildebrandt's suggestion[1] that by the False Prophet, or the "Second Beast from the land," is meant Vespasian. Let us apply to him the ten indications which the seer has furnished.

1. Being a "*wild beast*" it is *a priori* probable that he will belong to the heathen world. He rises "from the earth" or "from the land." If we take the former rendering it may point to his taking his origin, as an important power, not from the sea, or any sea-washed peninsula like Italy, whence Nero had sprung, but from the vast continent of Asia; *i.e.*, the growth of his power is connected with the East. If the words be rendered "*from the land*," they then apply to Judæa. Now both Jews[2] and Pagans[3] were struck with the fact that Vespasian, as Emperor, "went forth from Judæa," and they connected his rise in that country with many prophecies then current, not only in the East, but among the Romans themselves—prophecies which were familiar to more than one of the Cæsars, and had exercised no small influence on their aims and actions.

[1] Hilgenfeld's *Zeitschr.* 1874.
[2] Jos. *B. J.* vi. 5, § 4.
[3] Suet. *Vesp.* 6.

2. He had *two horns like unto a lamb*. There is hardly one of those who have been suggested as answering to the False Prophet to whom this description in any way applies. To Vespasian it *does* apply in a remarkable manner. His nature and his language, as compared with those of a Caligula and a Nero, were absolutely mild. He was indeed as indifferent to the blood and misery of a hostile people as all the Romans were; but there was nothing naturally ferocious and sanguinary in the character of this worthy bourgeois.[1] Now since the *ten horns* of the first Beast are ten provincial governors—ten powers which are, primarily, a source of his strength—we should expect that the *two horns* also indicated persons, and especially persons more or less imperial in their functions, in whose existence lay the strength of the Lamb-like Beast. And this was the exact position of Vespasian. His force lay in the fact

[1] Josephus boasts of the generosity of Vespasian as something extraordinary (*Antt.* xii. 3, § 2). His natural kindness, and freedom from hatred and revenge, are freely admitted, and may account for his external semblance to "a lamb" in the Apocalyptic symbol. Suetonius says that from the beginning to the end of his reign he was "*civilis et clemens*" (*Vesp.* 11); that he bore all kinds of opposition in the gentlest manner (*lenissime*, c. 13); and that he neither remembered nor revenged injuries (c. 14). But St. John, a Jew by birth and a true patriot, saw with Jewish eyes the inner wild-beast nature of the man. He would be little likely to share in the renegade admiration of Josephus for the general who, like his son, caused such myriads of Jews—

> "To swell, slow pacing by the car's tall side,
> The Stoic tyrant's philosophic pride;
> To flesh the lion's ravenous jaws, and feel
> The sportive fury of the fencer's steel;
> Or sigh, deep-plunged beneath the sultry mine,
> For the light airs of balmy Palestine."

St. John's estimate of him is that of the Rabbis, who narrated that he died in frightful torments; and that of the 2nd book of Esdras, that he ruled "with much oppression" (2 Esdr. xi. 32).

that he had *two sons, both of them men of mark:* Titus, the conqueror of Judæa, who kept the allegiance of the army firm for him while he was awaiting his actual accession to power; Domitian, who headed his party in Rome. But for their assistance his cause could not have prospered so decisively, and both of them succeeded to the empire after his death.[1]

3. *He spake as a dragon* or *serpent*, that is, he used the language generically of Paganism, and specifically of subtle and deceptive intention. The allusion may be to circumstances which were better known to St. John than to us; but meanwhile, whether it be generic or specific, there is sufficient evidence that it is appropriate in a sketch of the rise of Vespasian, and corresponds with the serpentine wisdom and caution with which his designs were carried out.

4. He is a *visible delegate of*, and responsible to, the first Beast. This applies better to Vespasian than to any one. The first outbreak of the Jewish war took place while Nero was indulging in his frantic follies of æstheticism in Greece, A.D. 66. He instantly despatched Vespasian to suppress the rebellion. To a general so placed it would have been an easy matter to revolt against the blood-stained actor who then afflicted the world. But as long as the Emperor lived, Vespasian, though not a favourite of Nero, remained conspicuously faithful.

5. And he *made the earth worship the first Beast*, whose death-stroke was healed. To enforce subjection to Nero, who even in his lifetime was "worshipped" as

[1] Titus and Domitian are probably the two heads on each side of the central head of the eagle in 2 Esdr. xi. 30, and ver. 35 may allude to the belief that Domitian poisoned Titus.

a god, was the express object of Vespasian's mission to the East. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that by the Wild Beast is meant the Roman Empire in general as well as Nero; and Rome was worshipped as a goddess in many of the provinces.[1]

6. It might seem an impossibility that any Roman general should have pretended *to work signs*, still more that there could be anything in his history which could be specifically described as a bringing down fire from heaven. It happens, however, that Vespasian is the one Roman—the only Roman in high places, *the only Imperial delegate*—to whom such language will apply. *His visit to Alexandria was accompanied by signs and wonders* which obtained wide credence. Not only had the Nile risen in a single day higher than it had ever done before, but Vespasian was believed to have worked personal miracles.[2] He had anointed with spittle the eyes of a blind man, and restored his sight; before a full assembly he had healed a cripple; and he had shown a remarkable example of second sight.[3] We do not, indeed, read that he had called down fire from heaven; but that expression may be metaphorical of the fire and sword with which he scathed and devastated Palestine, and we *can* see the circumstance which may have given shape to the image. It represents the False Prophet as a pseudo-Elias, and there was a circumstance which might well have suggested a sort of antithesis between the two. Vespasian had visited Carmel, and had received a remarkable communication

[1] On the apotheosis of Emperors, often even in their lifetime, see Sueton. *Octav.* 59; *Tiber.* 40; *Claud.* 2; *Calig.* 22, 24; *Vesp.* 9; Tac. *Ann.* i. 10, 74; iv. 15, 37; xiv. 31, etc., and *supra*, vol. i. p. 6.

[2] Dion Cass. lxvi. 8; Suet. *Vesp.* 7. [3] Tac. *Hist.* iv. 82.

from "the god Carmelus" (evidently intended for Elijah),[1] who, though not worshipped under the form of any image, had there an altar which was regarded as peculiarly sacred. This god Carmelus had given him an oracle, which, even in the version of Suetonius, reminds us strongly of Dan. xi. 36, namely, that "everything which he had in his mind should prosper, however great it was."[2] As a "*fulmen belli*," and as the supposed recipient of a favourable oracle from Elijah, Vespasian, in his brilliant successes at the beginning of the Jewish war, might well be said, in the style of writing which constantly intermingles the symbolic and the literal, to have flashed fire from heaven upon the enemies of the Beast.

7. He *gives breath to the image of the Beast and makes it speak.* Whether in this instance again we have some allusion to the story of a magic wonder current in that day we cannot tell. All that we know is that Vespasian would certainly enforce homage and reverence from the conquered Jews to the statues of the Emperor,[3] which Nero was specially fond of multiplying, and which the Jews regarded with peculiar abhorrence.[4] In the *Ascension of Isaiah* it is made a characteristic of Nero that "he shall erect his statue in all cities before his face."[5] Since Simon Magus pretended to animate statues with life, there may have been a rumour that something of the kind had taken place in Judæa. If not, the metaphorical meaning—

[1] Ritter, *Erdkunde*, viii. 705. Carmel is now called Mar Elyas.

[2] Suet. *Vesp.* 5; Tac. *Hist.* ii. 78.

[3] Jos. *Antt.* xviii. 8, § 1.

[4] "The image of the beast is clearly the statue of the Emperor."—*Milman.*

[5] *Ascens. Isa.* iv. 11; Lactant. ii. 7.

the reanimation of the Roman power in Palestine, which the successful revolt of the Jews had for a time extinguished—is quite sufficient to meet the language of the seer.

8. The *putting to death of those who will not worship the image of the Beast*:—the slaughter, banishment, and sale into slavery, of all who refused to accept the imperial authority, reverence the imperial images, and accept the imperial coinage, is a circumstance which will explain itself. It is a symbolic condensation of all that had already occurred in the Jewish war at Ascalon, at Sepphoris, at Gadara, at Jotapata, at Gerasa, at Japha, Joppa, Taricheæ, Giscala, Gamala, and throughout the whole north and west of Palestine.

9. *He stamps men of all ranks* and classes, high and low, rich and poor, *with the image of his Beast*, and the number of his name. This detail, which only applies in the loosest possible manner to any of the others who have been regarded as the antitypes of the False Prophet, suits Vespasian very closely. It exactly describes his natural conduct in giving his soldiers the brand of their service,[1] and exacting from all classes the oath of allegiance, making them swear "by the genius of Cæsar"—first of Nero, then of Galba.

Lastly, 10. *The forbidding all to buy and sell who have not got the mark of the Beast*, seems to be a very natural reminiscence of one of Vespasian's most remarkable acts. When Nero was dead, and Galba murdered, and Otho also had committed suicide after the terrible battle of Bedriacum, neither Vespasian nor his soldiers felt inclined to obey the imbecile rule of the glutton Vitellius. Vespasian accepted his own

[1] See Ronsch, *Das N. T. Tertullians*, p. 702.

nomination to the Empire by the legions of Mucianus as well as by his own soldiers, and he hastened to make himself master of the occasion by establishing his head-quarters at Alexandria. Any ruler who had hold of Alexandria could command the allegiance of Egypt, and the lord of Egypt could always put his hand upon the very throat of Rome. For if the corn ships did not sail from Alexandria the populace of Rome was starved. Accordingly, the first thing which Vespasian did was to *forbid all exports* from Alexandria. That stern edict was felt throughout the Empire. The object of it was to starve Rome into an absolute acceptance of his "mark of the Beast," *i.e.*, his imperial claim. It was entirely successful. Galba, Otho, and even Vitellius, were regarded as isolated military usurpers; Vespasian, the Wild Beast's delegate, the Wild Beast's miraculous upholder, mounted the Wild Beast's throne, and like him became one of the seven heads, and wielded the power of the ten provincial horns—once rebellious—now subdued; often inimical to the harlot-city, but always faithful to the Roman Empire.[1]

To me these circumstances, which I have drawn out in my own way, but of which the original discovery is due to Hildebrandt, seem to be nearly decisive. My only doubt is whether, in that subtle interchange of ideas which marks all symbolic literatures, St. John *may not have mingled two conceptions* in his description of the Second Beast. If so, I should feel no doubt that the subordinate monster was meant to *combine* the features observable in the position and conduct of Simon Magus, as the False Prophet and Impostor who supported Nero at Rome, and of Josephus

[1] Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 16, 17.

the False Prophet who embraced the cause of Vespasian in Palestine, with that of Vespasian himself as a two-horned Wild Beast maintaining the power of Rome in the Holy Land. The composite character of such a symbol presents no difficulty. It closely corresponds with known apocalyptic methods;—and certainly in this instance if the Second Wild Beast and False Prophet be regarded as a composite symbol (as is suggested by the alternative description), I think that I have here offered a closer approximation to every one of the requirements of the imagery than I have found in the pages of any other interpreter.

Lastly, to revert for one moment to the return of the Antichrist in the person of Nero, it is—as I have said—in apocalyptic and Oriental style amply fulfilled in the reign of Domitian. If Galba, Otho, and Vitellius be omitted from the list as mere transitory usurpers who would hardly be regarded as Emperors at all, then Nero the fifth Emperor *did* reappear, *not indeed in person, but in symbol,* in the eighth Emperor, Domitian.[1] Even Titus was regarded as likely to be a coming Nero.[2] The Jews were very far from looking upon him as the *amor et deliciae humani generis.* It is probable that Sulpicius Severus may be preserving for us the testimony of Tacitus when (ii. 97) he attributes to Titus the thoroughly Neronian and Antichristian purpose of uprooting both Christianity and Judaism in one and the same stroke. This purpose, if he ever had it, he did not live to carry out. But Domitian, at any rate, was,

[1] The Eight would then be Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Titus, Nero again in the form of Domitian; so that Nero was, and is not, and yet was to recur: he was at once the fifth and the eighth.

[2] "Denique propalam *alium Neronem* et opinabantur et praedicabant" (Suet. *Tit.* 7).

like Nero, an open persecutor of Christianity. Tertullian not only sets him side by side with Nero, but even calls him "a fragment of Nero, as far as his cruelty was concerned," and a sub-Nero.[1] In Domitian the Christians saw the legend of *Nero redivivus* symbolically and effectively if not literally fulfilled.

So great was the resemblance between him and his blood-stained prototype that the common nickname of Domitian in Rome was "*the bald Nero.*" "Titus," says Ausonius, "was fortunate in the shortness of his rule: his brother followed him, whom his Rome called '*a bald Nero;*'"[2] and Juvenal talks of the time when "the last Flavius was rending the half-dead world, and Rome was enslaved to *the bald Nero.*"[3] The identification of the spirit of Domitian with that of Nero was also familiar to Christian historians. Eusebius says that towards the close of his reign Domitian established himself as a successor of Nero's hatred to God and hostility against Him.[4] It was natural to St. John to symbolise Nero as "the Wild Beast," and the very same term (*immanissima bellua*) is applied by Pliny to Domitian.[5] Tacitus even draws a parallel between the two to the advantage of Nero.[6] Both showed the wild beast nature, but the ferocity of Domitian was more cruel and more innate. In him the death-wounded Antichrist was once more restored to life.

[1] Tert. *Apol.* 5; *De Pall.* 4.

[2] Auson. *Monost. de Ord. XII. Imp.* 11, 12.

[3] Juv. *Sat.* iv. 34, 35.

[4] τελευτῶν τῆς Νέρωνος θεοεχθρίας τὲ καὶ θεομαχίας διάδοχον ἑαυτόν κατεστήσατο (Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 17).

[5] *Paneg.* 48.

[6] Tac. *Agric.* 45: "Nero tamen subtraxit oculos, jussitque scelera non spectavit."

SECTION VII.

THE VIALS.

We have now passed in review all the more difficult Apocalyptic visions. A great part of the remainder of the Book is occupied with scenes which require but little comment, and convey directly their own great lessons. First, we have the glorious vision of the Lamb upon Mount Zion with the redeemed and virgin multitude. Then three Angels fly in rapid succession through the mid region of heaven. The first bears in his hand an eternal gospel which must be preached to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people before the End.[1] The second cries out in prophetic anticipation, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great." A third utters an awful warning to the Gentiles who worship the Beast and receive his mark. Then a Voice proclaims the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth, and immediately afterwards there appears on a white cloud one like unto the Son of Man, wearing a golden crown and grasping a sharp sickle. Then follows the harvest of the elect, and the vintage of the wrath of God, which seems to take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat,[2] and of which the imagery is tinged by reminiscences of the terrible Jewish War, with its deluge of rolling blood[3]—rolling 200 miles, or, roughly,

[1] Matt. xxiv. 14.

[2] Rev. xiv. 20; Isa. xvii. 5; lxiii. 1—6; Joel iv. 2, 11—14; Mic. iv. 13; Hab. iii. 12.

[3] Isa. lxiii. 3; comp. Enoch xcviii. 3: "The horse shall wade up to his breast, and the chariot shall sink to his axle in the blood of sinners." So too Silius Italicus (iii. 704) speaks of "flammam exspirare furentes cornipedes, *multoque fluentia sanguine lora.*"

the whole length from Tyre to Rhinocolura, from north to south of the Holy Land.[1]

Then, after an episode of resplendent triumph and thanksgiving in heaven, seven Angels, arrayed in precious stone,[2] pour out their vials of wrath upon the heathen world.[3] Like the plagues of the first four trumpets, they affect the earth, and the sea, and the rivers,[4] and the heavenly bodies, the seat of the Beast, and the River Euphrates, and they are ended by the terrible phenomena of storm and earthquake. They are again but a vivid picture of the repeated signs in the sun, and the moon, and the stars, the distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and the shaking of the powers of heaven, of which Christ had prophesied.[5] At the outpouring of the sixth Vial, the Euphrates is metaphorically dried up to prepare for the invasion of the kings of the East; and out of the mouths of the Devil, the Beast, and the False Prophet come three froglike spirits of demons working miracles which gather the heathen kings to the great battle of Har-Magedon—a symbol of satanic opposition gathering to a final head, and meeting with its final overthrow.[6]

[1] Jerome, *Ep. ad Dard.* states this at 160 miles; but the deluge of blood began to roll from a point far north of Tyre.

[2] Leg. λίθον, A, C, Vulg., and some MSS. known to Andreas. Comp. Ezek. xxviii. 13 (πάντα λίθον χρηστὸν ἐνδέδεσαι), "Every precious stone was thy covering" (see Westcott and Hort, *Greek Test.* ii. *ad loc.*, and compare Milton's—

"His vaunting foe
Though huge, and in a rock of diamond armed)."

[3] Ezek. xxii. 31; Zeph. iii. 8.

[4] Comp. Wisd. xi. 15—16; xvi. 1, 9; xvii. 2, *seqq.*

[5] Luke xxi. 25, 26. We have already seen that the practical identity of the seals, trumpets, and vials was known by tradition even to the earliest commentators; v. *supra*, pp. 224, 231, 265.

[6] The hill and plain of Megiddo were the scenes of great battles.

The seventh Angel pours out his vial on the air. There are thunders and a mighty earthquake. The great city (Jerusalem) is divided into three; the cities of the Gentiles fall; Rome—the mystic Babylon—comes into remembrance before God for vengeance; islands and mountains flee away, and there is a mighty plague of hail. We seem here to be in a region beyond the limits of history; but we can see that the images were in part suggested by that remarkable epoch of earthquakes which affected especially the cities of Asia, and by the three camps occupied by the army of Titus, and the three factions which occupied the three regions of Jerusalem—Simon in Bezetha, John in the Upper City, Eleazar in the Temple—and tore it to pieces with their internecine fury.

Then the great harlot city (Rome), drunken with the blood of the Neronian martyrs, is judged. Her judgment comes in part from the ten horns, which should have been the source of her strength, but which hate her, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Part at least of the symbol corresponds with the horrors inflicted upon Rome and Romans in the civil wars by provincial governors—already symbolised as the horns of the Wild Beast, and here characterised as kings yet kingdomless. Such were Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. Vespasian and Mucianus deliberately planned to starve the Roman populace;[1] and in the fierce struggle of the Vitellians against Sabinus and Domi-

They are in the Plain of Jezreel, the battle-field of Palestine (Judg. v. 19; 2 Kings xxiii. 29; Zech. xii. 11). Hence Ewald's conjecture that Har-Magedon is a cypher for Rome the Great (Ha Romah Haggedolah) is needless. Otherwise we might see here another instance of Gematria, for *Har-Magedon* and *Romah Hagedolah* are both = 304.

[1] Jos. *B. J.* iv. 10, § 5.

tian, and the massacre which followed, there occurred the event which sounded so portentously in the ears of every Roman—the burning to the ground of the Temple of the Capitoline Jupiter, on December 19th, A.D. 69.[1] It was not the least of the signs of the times that the space of one year saw wrapped in flames the two most hallowed shrines of the ancient world—the Temple of Jerusalem and the Temple of the great Latin god. The Jews were not alone in interpreting these events of the final dissolution of the Empire. Josephus saw, in the establishment of the Flavian dynasty, "the unexpected deliverance of the fortunes of Rome from ruin;"[2] Tacitus looked on the year A.D. 68 as one which threatened to be the final year of the Roman commonwealth.[3] The Apocalyptist of *II. Esdras* says of the Eagle in which he symbolises Rome, "Thou hast afflicted the weak, thou hast hurt the peaceable, thou hast loved liars, and hast cast down walls of such as did thee no harm; therefore appear no more, O Eagle! nor thy horrible wings, nor thy wicked feathers, nor thy malicious heads, nor thy hurtful claws, nor all thy vain body." (2 Esdr. xi. 42—46.) The author of the *Book of Baruch* says of Rome, the city which afflicted Jerusalem, "Fire shall come upon her from the Everlasting, long to endure; and she shall be inhabited of devils for a great time" (Bar. iv. 35).

The next chapters are occupied by the mingled wail and pæan over the doom of fallen Babylon, which is echoed in heaven.[4] The armies of heaven ride forth

[1] Tac. *H.* iii. 83; Jos. *B. J.* iv. 11, § 4.

[2] Jos. *B. J.* iv. 11, § 5. [3] Tac. *H.* i. 11.

[4] The expressions throughout chapters xvii.—xviii. are almost entirely borrowed from the ancient prophets (Isa. xiii., xxiii., xxiv., &c.; Jer. xvi., xxv.; Ezek. xxvi., xxvii.; Amos vi. 5—7.

after the Word of God, and the fowls of the air are summoned to feed on the flesh of kings and captains slain in impious battle. The Beast and the False Prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire, and their followers are slain by the sword of the heavenly Rider. Satan is bound for a thousand years, and the Millennium of the Saints begins.[1] When the thousand years are ended, Satan is to be loosed to gather all the heathen, Gog and Magog,[2] to the final battle against God, after which he shall be flung to join the Beast and the False Prophet in the Lake of Fire. The great White Throne is set. The dead are judged. There is a new heaven and a new earth. Glowing with gold and gems,[3] the New Jerusalem descends out of heaven from God,[4] through whose streets flows, bright as crystal, the River of the water of life, and there is no Temple there, nor light of moon nor sun, for the Lord God gives them light;—and there shall be no more curse.[5] The book ends with that which is the burden of the

[1] A literal millenarianism has been generally condemned by the Catholic Church. Victorinus and the earliest commentators understood the 1,000 years to have begun at the Incarnation. Origen and most of the Fathers understood it spiritually and metaphorically.

[2] Barbarian nations from the North (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.). Abarbanel on Jer. xxx. calls them nations from the East.

[3] Derived from Is. liv. 12; and comp. Yalkut Shimeoni, f. 54, *a*.

[4] The Rabbis inferred from Ps. cxxii. 3, that there was "a Jerusalem above" (Taanith, f. 5, *a*); and Rabbi Johanan says, "The Holy One will bring precious stones and pearls, each measuring 30 cubits by 30, and after polishing them down to 20 cubits by 20, will place them in the gates of Jerusalem" (Bava Bathra, f. 25, *a*). Again, "The Jerusalem of this world is not as the Jerusalem of the world to come. The former is open to all; to the latter (Rev. xxi. 5) none shall go up but those who are ordained to enter" (*id.* 75, *b*). As to its height (Rev. xxi. 16) the Rabbis say that God will place it on the summits of Mounts Sinai, Tabor, and Carmel (Isa. ii. 2).

[5] Zech. xiv. 11.

whole—Yea! I come quickly. And the seer answers, as all Christians have ever answered, Amen! Come, Lord Jesus![1]

And thus the whole book, from beginning to end, teaches the great truths—Christ shall triumph! Christ's enemies shall be overcome! They who hate Him shall be destroyed; they who love Him shall be blessed unspeakably. The doom alike of Jew and of Gentile is already imminent. On Judæa and Jerusalem, on Rome and her Empire, on Nero and his adorers, the judgment shall fall. Sword and fire, and famine and pestilence, and storm and earthquake, and social agony and political terror are nothing but the woes which are ushering in the Messianic reign. Old things are rapidly passing away. The light upon the visage of the old dispensation is vanishing and fading into dimness, but the face of Him who is as the sun is already dawning through the East. The new and final covenant is instantly to be established amid terrible judgments; and it is to be so established as to render impossible the continuance of the old. Maranatha! The Lord is at hand! Even so come, Lord Jesus! *Mane nobiscum Domine, nam advesperascit!*

[1] The solemn curse against any one who adds to, or takes from, the book, was not uncommon in days when literary forgery and interpolation were remarkably common. Thus Irenæus ended one of his books with the words:—"I adjure you, copyists of this book, by the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His glorious coming to judge the quick and the dead, that you compare and carefully correct your copy by this exemplar, and likewise place this adjuration in your copy" (*Opp.* i. p. 821, ed. Stieren). A similar passage is found at the end of Rufinus's prologue to his version of Origen's *De Principiis* (see Huidekoper, *Judaism at Rome*, p. 289).

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

"The Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem" (Isa. xxxi. 9).

"What was the cause of the destruction of the Second Temple, seeing that the age was distinguished for the study of the laws? . . . . . It was *groundless hatred*" (Yoma, f. 9, *b*).

THERE is no need to dwell upon the last days of Jerusalem. Very little can be added to the horrible story beyond what is to be read by every one in the pages of Josephus.[1] It is true that Josephus has effectually blackened his own memory. It would have been well for him if he had only written the *Antiquities* and the *Dialogue against Apion*. In his *Jewish War*, and, above all, in his autobiography, he stands confessed as a false, heartless, and designing renegade. The man who, standing in sight of the ruins of Zion and the blackened area on which had shone the Holy of Holies, complacently tells us how Titus gave him other lands in Judæa, because those which he had possessed near Jerusalem had become useless; the man who gloatingly recounts the honours heaped upon him by the conquerors who flung thousands of his brave countrymen to the wild beasts, and sold tens of thousands more into brutal

[1] For modern narratives derived from him, see F. de Saulcy, *Les Derniers Jours de Jerusalem*, 1866; Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, vol. iii.; Merivale, *Hist. of the Romans*, ch. lix; Ewald, *Gesch.* vi. 696—813.

misery; the man who, in the sumptuous palace which he owed to his conqueror, could detail without a sob the extermination of his people; the man who could gaze with complacent infamy on the triumph which told of the destruction of his nation's liberty, and could look on while the hallowed vessels of the Sanctuary were held aloft before a Pagan populace by bloodstained hands; the man who in youth haunted the boudoir of Poppæa, and in old age hung about the antechambers of Domitian; the man who pursued with the posthumous hatred of successful treachery the brave though misguided patriots who had held it a glory to die for Jerusalem—must stand forth till the end of time in the immortal infamy which his own writings have heaped upon himself.[1] We cannot be surprised that all the patriots of his nation hated him, and tried to disturb his base prosperity and "gilded servitude." No one trusts the word of Josephus where he has the least interest in palming off upon us a deception. But he had no particular reason to misrepresent the general facts of the awful and heroic struggle in which for a few months he bore a part. And since the writings of Justus of Tiberias, and Antonius Primus have perished, as well as the later part of the *History* of Tacitus, Josephus becomes our sole guide. The Talmud has almost nothing to tell us. In it we look in vain for the names of John, or Simon, or Eleazar. We only see a dim glimpse of flames and assassination, and ruin, mixed up with curious legends and tales of individual agony.[2]

[1] See Derenbourg, p. 264, and *n.* xi.; Grätz, iii. 365, *seq.*, 386, 411; Salvador, *Hist.* ii. 467; De Quincey, *Works.*

[2] Derenbourg, pp. 266, 282—288. Some of the stories which Josephus

In April, A.D. 70, Titus, with a force of 80,000 legionaries and auxiliaries, pitched his camp on Scopus, to the north of the city. Besides the 2,400 trained Jewish warriors who defended the walls, the city was thronged with an incredible number of Passover pilgrims, and of fugitives from other parts of Judæa. Feats of heroic valour were performed on both sides, and the skill of the besiegers was often checked by the almost insane fury of the besieged. Fanatically relying on the visible manifestation of Jehovah, while they were infamously violating all His laws, the Zealots rejected with insult every offer of terms. At last Titus drew a line of circumvallation round the doomed city, and began to crucify all the deserters who fled to him. The incidents of the famine which then fell on the besieged are among the most horrible in human literature. The corpses bred a pestilence. Whole houses were filled with unburied families of the dead. Mothers slew and devoured their own children. Hunger, rage, despair, and madness seized the city. It became a cage of furious madmen, a city of howling wild beasts, and of cannibals,—a hell![1] For the first time for five centuries, on July 17, A.D. 70, the daily sacrifices of the Temple ceased for want of priests to offer them. Disease and slaughter ruthlessly accomplished their work. At last, amid shrieks and flames, and suicide and massacre, the Temple was taken and reduced to ashes. The great altar of sacrifice was heaped with the slain. The courts of the Temple swam deep in blood. Six thousand miserable women and children sank with a wild cry of terror amid the blazing ruins of the

recounts of himself are transferred in the Talmud to the celebrated Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai.

[1] Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, 507.

cloisters. Romans adored the insignia of their legions on the place where the Holiest had stood. As soon as they became masters of the Upper City they only ceased to slay when they were too weary to slay any longer. According to Josephus, it had been the earnest desire of Titus to preserve the Temple, but his commands were disobeyed by his soldiers in the fury of the struggle. According to Sulpicius Severus, on the other hand, who is probably quoting the very words of Tacitus, Titus formed the deliberate purpose to destroy Christianity and Judaism in one blow, believing that if the Jewish root were torn up the Christian branch would soon perish.[1] The tallest and most beautiful youths were reserved for the conqueror's triumph. Of those above seventeen years of age multitudes were doomed to work in chains in the Egyptian mines. Others were sent as presents to various towns to be slain by wild beasts or gladiators, or by each other's swords in the provincial amphi-

[1] "Alii *et Titus ipse* evertendum templum imprimis censebant, quo plenius Judaeorum et Christianorum religio tolleretur. Quippe has religiones licet contrarias sibi, iisdem tamen auctoribus profectas; radice sublatâ stirpem facile perituram" (Sulp. Sev. *Sacr. Hist.* ii. 30, § 6, 7). He had access both to the lost part of the *Histories* of Tacitus, and also to the work of Antonius Julianus, *De Judaeis*. The latter, who was one of Titus's council of war, wrote with far less biassed motives than Josephus, who is not to be trusted when he had anything to gain by disguising the truth. Dr. Bernays, of Breslau, believes that Sulpicius Severus is quoting Tacitus in the sentence quoted above. Grätz (iii. 403) contemptuously rejects this suggestion, on the ground that Titus could scarcely have heard of the Christians. But Titus saw a great deal of Josephus and of Agrippa II., and there are signs that Josephus knew a good deal more about Christianity than he ventures to say, and that Agrippa had not been uninfluenced by the arguments of St. Paul (see Derenbourg, p. 252). On the other hand, Ewald thinks that this assertion as to the purpose of Titus is weakened by the repetition of it in the case of Hadrian: "existimans se Christianam fidem loci injuria" (*i.e.* by profaning the site of the Temple) "peremturum" (Sulp. Sev., *Sacr. Hist.* ii. 31, § 3; Ewald, *Gesch.* vi. 797).

theatres. The young of both sexes were sold as slaves. Even during the days on which these arrangements were being made, 11,000 perished for want of food; some because their guards would not give it to them, others because they would not accept it. Josephus reckons the number of captives taken during the war at 97,000, and the number of those who perished during the siege at 1,100,000. The numbers who perished in the whole war are reckoned at the awful total of 1,337,490, and the number of prisoners at 101,700; but even these estimates do not include all the items of many skirmishes and battles, nor do they take into account the multitudes who, throughout the whole country, perished of misery, famine, and disease. It may well be said that the nation seemed to have given itself "a rendezvous of extermination." Two thousand putrefying bodies were found even in the subterranean vaults of the city. During the siege all the trees of the environs had been cut down, and hence the whole appearance of the place, with its charred and bloodstained ruins, was so completely altered, that one who was suddenly brought to it would not (we are told) have recognised where he was. And yet the site had been so apparently impregnable, with its massive and unequalled fortifications, that Titus freely declared that he saw in his victory the hand of God.[1]

[1] It is curious to contrast the pious, gentle, and amiable Titus of Josephus, and the "Love and darling of the human race" of Roman historians, with "Titus the Bad" (Ha-rashâ), or "the Tyrant," of the Talmudists. Their well-known legend tells that, being caught in a terrible storm, and getting safe to land, he defied God, Who, to punish him, sent a little gnat (יתוש), which crept up his nostrils into his brain, and caused him incessant and sleepless anguish. At his death it was found to be "as big as a bird, and to have a beak and claws of steel" (Bereshith Rabba x.; Tanchuma, 62, *a*, &c.) It may be imagined how

From that time all Jews on seeing Jerusalem rend their garments, and exclaim, "Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste."[1]

It was to this event, the most awful in history—"one of the most awful eras in God's economy of grace, and the most awful revolution in all God's religious dispensations"[2]—that we must apply those prophecies of Christ's coming in which every one of the Apostles and Evangelists describe it as *near at hand*.[3] To those prophecies our Lord Himself fixed these three most definite limitations—the one, that before that generation passed away all these things would be fulfilled;[4] another, that some standing there should not taste death till they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom;[5] the third, that the Apostles should not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.[6] It is strange that these distinct limitations should not be regarded as a decisive proof that the Fall of Jerusalem was, in the fullest sense, the Second Advent of the Son of Man, which was primarily contemplated by the earliest voices of prophecy.

And, indeed, the Fall of Jerusalem and all the events which accompanied and followed it in the Roman world and in the Christian Church, had a significance which it

patriotic Jews felt towards *Titus Flavius* Josephus. The name on which he prided himself would be to them a veritable "brand of the Beast."

[1] Isa. lxiv. 10, 11; Moed Katon, f. 26, *a*.

[2] Bp. Warburton's *Julian*, i. p. 21.

[3] Acts ii. 16—20, 40; iii. 19—21; 1 Thess. iv. 13—17; v. 1—16; 2 Thess. i. 7—10; 1 Cor. i. 7; x. 11; xv. 21; xvi. 22; Rom. xiii. 11, 12; Phil. iii. 20; iv. 5; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1; Heb. i. 2; x. 25, 37; James v. 3, 8, 9; 1 Pet. ii. 7; 2 Pet. iii. 12; 1 J. ii. 18.

[4] Matt. xxiv. 34. [5] Matt. xvi. 28. [6] Matt. x. 23.

is hardly possible to over estimate. They were the final end of the old Dispensation. They were the full inauguration of the New Covenant. They were God's own overwhelming judgment on that form of Judaic Christianity which threatened to crush the work of St. Paul, to lay on the Gentiles the yoke of an abrogated Mosaism, to establish itself by threats and anathemas as the only orthodoxy. Many of the early Christians—and those especially who lived at Jerusalem—were at the same time rigid Jews. So long as they continued to walk in the ordinances of their fathers as a national and customary duty, such observances were harmless; but it is the inevitable tendency of this external rigorism to usurp in many minds the place of true religion. In every Church, as we see from most of the Catholic epistles, as well as in those of St. Paul, the Judaists asserted themselves, and won over the devoted adherence of the multitude, which is ever ripe for the slavery of rigid dogmas and narrow forms. It required the whole force of St. Paul's inspired and splendid genius to save Christianity from sinking into an exclusive sect of repellent Ebionites. No event less awful than the desolation of Judæa, the destruction of Judaism, the annihilation of all possibility of observing the precepts of Moses, could have opened the eyes of the Judaisers from their dream of imagined infallibility. Nothing but God's own unmistakable interposition—nothing but the manifest coming of Christ—could have persuaded Jewish Christians that the Law of the Wilderness was annulled; that the idolised minutiæ of Levitism could no longer claim to be divinely obligatory; that the Temple, to which so many myriads had resorted from every region of the world, as to a common

refuge, where they found peace and forgiveness and holy thoughts and joyous hopes,[1] had been smitten to the ground as though by flashes of God's own avenging fire; that the sacrifices, of which Philo had so recently said, "they are being offered even until now, and they shall be offered for ever,"[2] had been finally, decisively, and, by the direct action of Divine Providence, annulled. It was absurd to imagine that salvation could in any way depend on obedience to a law to which obedience had been rendered impossible by God's own decree. The facts, so terrible to Jewish imagination, that the steps of the profane had carried their bloody footprints into the Holiest, where only the High Priest could enter once a year; that the unclean hands of Gentiles had been laid on the golden altars; that the sacred rolls of the Torah, for which any Jew would have been ready to die, had been carried captive, for every profane eye to gaze upon, along the streets of Edom and Babylon—were but symbols of the yet deadlier fact that henceforth that law could not be kept, nor the Paschal lamb slain, nor the ceremonies of even the Great Day of Atonement any longer observed. Judaism, a religion of which the Temple was the most essential centre, of which sacrifices were the most essential element, became a religion without a temple and without a sacrifice. It became no longer possible for even the most Pharisaic of sacerdotalists to talk as though the very universe depended on ceremonies and vestments, or on the right burning of the two kidneys with the fat.

Christian historians rightly appreciate the significance of the event. The Temple, says Orosius, was

[1] Philo, *De Monarchia* (Mangey, ii. 223).
[2] *Id.*, *Leg. ad Gaium* (Mangey, ii. 569).

overthrown and done away with, because it could no longer serve any good or useful object, since now the Church of God was vigorously germinating throughout the world.[1] When, in A.D. 120, Ælia Capitolina was built by Hadrian on the ruins of Jerusalem, and Christians were allowed free access to it, while no Jew was suffered to approach it, the Church of the Circumcision was practically at an end. "Up to that time," says Sulpicius Severus, "almost all Christians in Judæa observed the Law while they worshipped Christ as God; but it was the result of God's ordinance that henceforth the slavery of the Law should be taken away from the freedom of the Church."[2] The Church of Ælia Capitolina was no longer prevalently Judaic; nay more, in a mission to Hadrian it formally severed itself from the Jews. For the first time, in A.D. 137, it selected as its bishop Marcus, an uncircumcised Gentile.[3] The event significantly proved that even in Judæa the future destinies of the Christian Church were in no further danger of falling into the hands of either Ebionites or Nazarenes.[4] The Church then emancipated itself finally and for ever from the trammels of the Synagogue.

No one was more deeply influenced by this event than St. John. A full quarter of a century elapsed between the ripe manhood when he wrote the Apocalypse and the

[1] "Ecclesia Dei jam per totum orbem germinante, hoc (templum) tanquam effoetum et vacuum nullique usui bono commodum arbitrio Dei auferendum fuit" (*Oros.* vii. 9).

[2] Sulp. Sev. *H. S.* ii. 31.

[3] Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 6; Grätz, *Gesch. d. Juden.* iv. 183.

[4] The furious persecutions and massacres of Christians by the False Messiah Bar Cochba (A.D. 132—134), which first *thoroughly* opened the eyes of the Pagan world to the difference between Jews and Christians, were due alike to the rejection of his claims by the Christians, and their refusal to join him in his revolt" (Grätz, *Gesch.* iv. 154, 457).

old age in which he wrote the Gospel and Epistles. The colouring and spirit of the Apocalypse are clearly Judaic; but we see alike in the advanced Christology,[1] and in the recognition of the equality of the redeemed Gentiles,[2] and in the absence of any Temple in the New Jerusalem, how far St. John was removed from the heresies of those Jewish Christians to whom Christ was no more than the Jewish Messiah, and Christianity no more than an engrafting of their belief upon an otherwise unchanged Pharisaism. And yet, though the Gospel and Epistles are identical with the Apocalypse in essential doctrines—though the thought of Christ as the Victim Lamb is prominent in both—we see how wide is the difference which separates them; how much calmer is the style, how much deeper the revelation, contained in the later writings; how the light which had dawned so brightly upon the Apostles in the Church of Jerusalem had shone more and more unto the perfect day. The Gospel and Epistles contain the same truths as the Apocalypse,[3] but the symbols are spiritualised. Jerusalem, even as a symbol, no longer occupies the foreground of his thoughts, and positive Judaic ordinances sink into insignificance in comparison with the knowledge of God which is eternal life. The Apocalypse is mainly occupied with the awfulness of retribution: the Gospel and Epistles are dominated by the ideal of love.

Unless these considerations be admitted in their fullest extent, it becomes impossible to maintain that writings so different, even amid their partial similari-

[1] Rev. iii. 14; v. 13; xix. 13; xvii. 14; xix. 16, &c.

[2] Rev. vii. 9.

[3] As even Baur admits (*Three Christian Centuries*, i. 154).

ties, could have come from the same hand. It is true that in the Apocalypse we have a material eschatology, and in the later writings a spiritual consummation. It is true that the Apocalypse is an expression of Judaic Christianity, and that the Gospel and Epistles are not. It is true that the points of contrast which they offer are more salient than their resemblances. It is even true that both could never have existed *simultaneously* in the same mind. In the Apocalypse the symbols of Heaven itself are mainly Jewish and Levitical, and in the Gospel the evanescence and annulment of such forms is clearly proclaimed. In the Apocalypse the elements of Divine wrath are mainly depicted in phraseology borrowed from the old prophetic images; in the later writings God is depicted almost exclusively in the attributes of compassion and love. In the Apocalypse Christ is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the ruler who, with a rod of iron, shall dash the nations in pieces like a potter's vessel; in the Gospel He is the Good Shepherd who layeth down His life for the sheep. In the later writings there are no wars and collisions—no acts of awful vengeance at which the saints look on with exultation; but the world is something wholly apart from the kingdom of the saints, and that kingdom is spiritual and in the heart. In the Apocalypse the Antichrist is a blood-stained Roman Emperor; in the Epistles there are many antichrists, and they are forms of speculative error. In the Apocalypse there are two resurrections, both physical, one before, one after, the Millennium; in the Gospel the first and chief resurrection is that from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. In the Apocalypse Heaven is wholly a future splendour; in the Epistles it is already a living and present realisation of

God's presence in the heart. The Apocalyptist consoles the Christian sufferer with the hope of what he shall be; the Evangelist with the knowledge of what he is.[1]

How, then, it may be asked, can the Evangelist and the Seer of Patmos be one and the same person?[2]

They are one and the same, but divided from each other by nearly a quarter of a century—by more than twenty years of divine education and broadening light. Many of these differences arise from the dealing with truths which are indeed widely diverse, but which yet are equally true, and which are necessary to complement each other. Many of them may be summed up and accounted for in the single remark that the Apocalypse *is* an Apocalypse, and that it was written amid the throbbing agonies of the Jewish war and after the bloodstained horrors of the Neronian persecution. At that time St. John still belonged in training and sympathy to the Church of the Circumcision. The Gospel and Epistles, on the other hand, were written after long residence among Gentiles, when the whole perspective of the Apostle's thoughts had been altered by the flood of divine illumination cast alike upon the Old and the New Covenant by the fulfilment of Christ's own prophecies of His coming. After the Fall of Jerusalem He had established His kingdom upon earth by closing for ever the Jewish dispensation.

Nor must it be forgotton that amid all the differences which separate these writings there are many subtle similarities in the temperament of the writer, in his

[1] See Reuss, *Hist. de la Théol. Chrét.* ii. 564—571.

[2] Ewald says with his usual positiveness, "Sie ergibt sich je genauer man sie nach allen Seiten hin untersucht . . . desto gewisser als von einem ganz andern Schriftsteller und als nicht vom Apostel verfasst" *Johann. Schriften*, ii. 1).

phraseology, and in his theological standpoint. In both we have the prominent conception of Christ as the Lamb of God;[1] in both—and in them alone—He is called "The Word." In both we read of the "Living Water." In both we find the recognition of the priority in time of the Jew and of the admission of the Gentiles. Both books give prominence to the prophecy of Zechariah (xii. 10), "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced," and both in their reference to this verse diverge in the same way from the LXX. No careful student of St. John's writings can fail to see that in many respects, and in relation to many doctrines, an identity of essence underlies the dissimilarity of form.[2] Not one of the Johannine books could be spared from the sacred canon without manifest and grievous loss; all of them are rich in truths which are necessary to make us wise unto salvation.

[1] In the Gospel ἀμνός, in the Apocalypse ἀρνίον. It has been ingeniously suggested that ἀρνίον may have been chosen as physiologically equivalent in sound to θηρίον.

[2] For a most satisfactory proof of this, see Gebhardt, *Doctrine of the Apocalypse* (E. Tr., Clark, Edinb. 1878). Isolated resemblances are Rev. ii. 2; John xvi. 12 ("cannot bear"); Rev. ii. 3; John iv. 6 ("faint"); angels and saints "in white" (ἐν λευκοῖς, Rev. iii. 18; John xx. 12); effects of "anointing" (Rev. iii. 18; 1 John ii. 20). Besides these there are other verbal resemblances, such as τηρεῖν λόγον, or λόγους (Rev. iii. 8, 16; xxii. 7, 9, &c.; John viii. 51; 1 John ii. 5); ποιεῖν ψεῦδος, or ἀλήθειαν (Rev. xxii. 15; 1 John i. 6); αἵματα (? B, &c.) (Rev. xviii. 24; John ii. 13); "He that is true" (Rev. iii. 7; xix. 11; John i. 14; xiv. 6; 1 John v. 20); and the common peculiar usage of the words ἀληθινός, βροντή, δαιμόνιον, ἑβραϊστί, ἐκκεντεῖν, ὄψις, πορφύρεος, σκηνοῦν, σφάττειν, &c. On the other side see, among others, Düsterdieck, pp. 73—80; Ewald, *Johann. Schriften*, ii. 52, 53, 61, 62.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE GROWTH OF HERESY.

. . . . ὡς ἄρα μέχρι τῶν τότε χρόνων παρθένος καθαρὰ καὶ ἀδιάφθορος ἔμεινεν ἡ Ἐκκλησία.—HEGESIPP. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 32.

"La fumée qui obscurcit le Soleil c'est à dire l'hérésie."—BOSSUET.

THERE were, as I have said, three great events which deeply influenced the last and most active period of the life of St. John—the Neronian persecution, the fall of Jerusalem, and the growth of Heresy. The two former events, which were sudden and overwhelming, woke their tremendous echoes in the Apocalypse. The third event was very gradual. We find traces of it in the letters to the Seven Churches, but it had a still deeper influence on the Gospel and the Epistles, which were the inestimable fruit of the Apostle's ripest years. According to the tradition of the Church, they were especially written to combat heresy, not by the method of direct and vehement controversy, but by that noblest of all methods which consists in the irresistible presentation of counter truths.

The word "heresy," though it is used in the Authorised Version to translate the *hairesis* of the New Testament, has not the same meaning. The word was not originally applied in a bad sense. In Classic Greek, for instance, it merely meant a choice of principles, a school of philosophy or of thought.[1] In the

[1] Sext. Empir. i. 16; Cic. *ad Fam.* xv. 16, 3.

New Testament it comes to mean "a faction," and the sin condemned by the word is not the adoption of erroneous opinions, but *the factiousness of party spirit.*[1] It was, however, perfectly natural that it should come to mean[2] a wrong choice, a false system. For Christianity being a divine revelation involves a fellowship and unity in all essential verities, and he who gives undue preponderance to his own arbitrary conceptions, he who allows to subjective influences or traditional errors an unlimited sway over his interpretations of truth, becomes a heretic. And in this sense many are heretics who most pride themselves on their vaunted catholicity; for the source of all heresies is the spirit of pride, and the worst of all heresies is the spirit of hatred. The word "heretic" has indeed been shamefully abused. It has again and again been applied, in a thoroughly heretical, and worse than heretical manner, to the insight and inspiration of the few who have discovered aspects of truth hitherto unnoticed, or restored old truths by the overthrow of dominant perversions. A Church can only prove its possession of life by healthy development. Morbid uniformity, enforced by the tyranny of a dominant sect, is the most certain indication of dissolution and decay. Since Christianity is manysided, the worst form of heresy is the mechanical suppression of divergence from popular shibboleths. Every great reformer in turn, every discoverer of new forms or expressions of religious truth, every slayer of old and monstrous errors, has been called a heretic. When a new truth could not be refuted,

[1] It only occurs in Acts v. 17; xv. 5; xxiv. 5, 14; xxvi. 5; xxviii. 22; 1 Cor. xi. 19; Gal. v. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 1.

[2] See Neander, *Ch. Hist.* ii. 4.

it was easy for the members of a dominant party to gratify their impotent hatred by burning him who had uttered it; and though religious partisans can no longer commit to the flames those who differ from them, it is as true in our days as in those of Milton, that—

> "Men whose faith, learning, life, and pure intent
> Would have been held in high esteem by Paul,
> Must now be called and printed 'heretic'
> By shallow Edwards and Scotch what d'ye call."

But the real heretics were, in most cases, the supporters of ecclesiastical tyranny and stereotyped ignorance, by whom these martyrs were tortured and slain. He, and he only, is, in the strict and technical sense of the word, a heretic, who denies the fundamental truths of Christianity, as embodied in the catholic creeds which sufficed to express the doctrines of the Church in the first four centuries of her history. But we are taught by daily experience that it is possible to hold catholic truth in an heretical spirit, and heresy in a catholic spirit. By the fraud of the devil many a Catholic has acted in the spirit of an infidel; and, by the grace of God, many a heretic has shown the virtue of a saint. As for the existence of diversity in the midst of general unity, it is not only inevitable, but, in our present condition of imperfection, it is the only means to secure a right apprehension of truth. Christianity may be regarded in two aspects—as a law of life and as a system of doctrines. But neither was the law of life laid down in rigid precepts, nor was the plan of salvation set forth in dialectics. Men may be pure and true Christians, though their holiness reveals itself in manifold varieties of form;

they may be in faithful and conscientious communion with the Catholic Church, though the inevitable differences of individuality lead to different modes of apprehending the essential Gospel. All that is indispensable is that their varieties of opinion should be subordinate to one divine unity, and that their mode of life under all differences should express some aspect of the one divine ideal.

The *moral* fibre of bitterness from which all heresies spring is one and the same. Whether they result from the blind and tyrannous unanimity of corrupt Churches, or the wild self-assertion of opinionated individuals, they owe their ultimate origin to the pride and ambition of the heart. But the *intellectual* sources of heresy were manifold. It was produced by the contact of Christianity with Heathenism and with Judaism, and was especially derived from the forms of philosophy which had sprung up in the bosom of both religions.

The Gentiles, as a rule, hated the Mosaic Law, and looked on Christianity as the antagonist of Judaism, rather than as its dissolution and fulfilment. The Jews, on the other hand, saw in Christianity only an accretion to the Law of Moses, and clung to the most rigid letter of institutions which Heathenism despised. Hence, amid the numberless ramifications of heretical sects which disturbed the Church of the first century, and which were massed together under the vague and often inappropriate name of Gnosticism, some were Judaic and some were anti-Judaic.

1. To the Jewish sects we have already alluded. They may be classed under the two heads of Nazarenes and Ebionites.

We have been obliged again and again to notice

that the earliest decades after the Ascension were marked by a severe struggle between the views of Judaising and of Gentile Christians. St. James, the head of the Judaisers, had nevertheless adopted the views of St. Peter as regards the freedom of the Gentiles, and while he continued to be a blameless observer of the Mosaic Law, he gave full tolerance to all converts from Paganism who did not violate the Noachian precepts. This was the decision of the Synod at Jerusalem. But the party who wrote upon their banners the name of the Bishop of Jerusalem went much further. It was one of the main works of St. Paul's life to counteract their surreptitious methods of strangling the growth of true Christianity by insisting that all Gentiles must be circumcised, and must observe the entire Levitic Law. It was in the ranks of these Judaists that there arose that imminent danger of apostasy against which they had received such solemn warnings in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Epistle of St. James himself; it was from their ranks also that there arose the two sects of Ebionites and Nazarenes.

It may well be thought strange that the most definite existence of these Jewish Christian sects falls in the era *after* the Fall of Jerusalem, when it might have been deemed impossible for any one to retain the opinion that God had intended the Jewish Law to be eternally obligatory. But prejudice, fortified by custom, is almost ineradicable. Judaism, when robbed of all power to observe its ritual, took refuge in its Law, regarded as a separate and ideal entity. The disease uncured even by the amputation of its chief limb, fastened itself with unabated virulence on the vital

organs. The Mosaic Law assumed in the minds of Talmudists the place of God Himself, and by the Law they meant not morals but Rabbinism, not the Decalogue but the Halacha. When Pope says that in some of the discussions of the *Paradise Lost*—

> "In quibbles angel and archangel join,
> And God the Father turns a school divine,"

he was using the broadest satire; but his words are applicable in their most literal sense to the teachings of the Rabbis, who arrogantly usurped the exclusive name of *Hachakamím*, or "the Wise." They represent God as Himself a student of the Torah. They disputed whether God Himself did not wear phylacteries.[1] They represent Heaven as a great Rabbinic school in which there are differences of opinion about the Halacha. On one occasion, they assert, there was a dispute in the celestial academy about the minutiæ of a Levitic decision, and as the Deity took one view while the angels took the opposite, it became necessary to summon the soul of Rabbi Bar Nachman. To him consequently the Angel of Death is despatched. The Rabbi is asked his opinion, and gives it on the side of the Almighty, who is represented—with a *naïveté* astonishing in its blasphemous arrogance—as highly pleased with the result of the discussion![2]

If then the Jews could still find space for the practice and idealisation of their Levitism when scarcely one of its directions could be carried out—if almost without an effort the schools of Jamnia and Tiberias and Pumbeditha could transform their theocracy into a

[1] Bab. Berachoth, 6 *a*, 7 *a* (p. 240, Schwab).
[2] Babha Metzia, 86, *a*.

nomocracy, and their theology into a Levitic scholasticism, we are hardly surprised to find that the influence of old traditions was sufficiently strong, and especially within the limits of the Holy Land, to keep alive the spirit of Jewish Christianity. Far on into the fourth, and perhaps even down to the fifth, century there continued to be not only "*Genists*," or Jews by race, and "*Masbotheans*," who observed the Jewish Sabbath, and "*Merists*," who kept up a partial observance of the Jewish Law,[1] but also organised Christian sects, who, although they were excluded from the bosom of the orthodox Church, had a literature of their own—the ancient counterpart of the modern "religious newspaper"—and not only maintained their ground, but even displayed a wide-spread and proselytising activity.

a. The NAZARENES, as a distinctive sect, were the Jewish Christians who did not remove from Pella when—if we may accept the ancient tradition—the fugitive Church of Jerusalem returned to Ælia Capitolina,[2] which no Jew was allowed to enter. But they existed much earlier, and are to be regarded less as deliberate heretics than as imperfect, narrow-minded, and unenlightened Christians. Epiphanius calls them "Jews, and nothing else;"[3] but since they accepted the Epistles of St. Paul, and acknowledged the true divinity of Christ,[4] we may set aside his uncharitable description of them. If, as is probable, their views are

[1] Hegesippus, *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 22.

[2] Neander, *Ch. Hist.* i. 475.

[3] Epiphan. *Haer.* xxx. 9.

[4] They are said, however, to have denied His Præ-existence (Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 27), but we may class them with the τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀποδεχόμενοι of Origen (*c. Cels.* v. 61). The reason why the early allusions to them are contradictory, is because the opinions of these "subdichotomies of petty schisms" were doubtless ill-defined.

represented by the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, we can see that while they clung with needless tenacity to the obsolete and the abrogated, this was only the result of limited insight and national custom. Their reversion to the religion of the Patriarchs, as representing a purer and more absolute religion than the Levitic system, is distinctly Pauline, and they honestly accepted the faith of Christ.[1] It has been inferred from passages of this book that they held the view that Jesus only became a Divine Being at His baptism, but the expressions used seem to be at least capable of a more innocent and orthodox interpretation.[2]

b. The EBIONITES, on the other hand, were daringly heretical. They rejected altogether the writings of St. Paul,[3] and pursued his memory for some generations with covert but virulent calumny. They insisted on the necessity of circumcision and the universal validity of the Law. They regarded Christ as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary, justified only by his legal righteousness.[4] To these views some of the Ebionites—who died away as an obscure sect on the shores of the Dead Sea—superadded ascetic notions and practices which they seem to have borrowed from the Essenes.[5] Hence, in all probability, was derived their name of Ebionites, from the Hebrew word *Ebion*, "poor." The error that there was such a person as Ebion was due to

[1] See Neander, *Ch. Hist.* ii. 19—21; Mansel, *Gnostic Heresies*, pp. 123—128; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, pp. 298—301; Ritschl, *Altkath. Kirche*, pp. 152, *seq.*

[2] *Test. XII. Patr.*, Levi, 18; Simeon, 7.

[3] Orig. *c. Cels.* v. *ad fin.*

[4] Hence Marius Mercator calls them Homuncionitae (*Refut. anath. Nestor.* 12), and Lactantius *Anthropiani* (*Instt.* iv. *ad fin.*).

[5] Tert. *De Carn. Christi*, 14; *De Praescr.* 33, 48; Philastr. *Haer.* 37; Aug. *de Haer.* 16.

Epiphanius, who calls him "a successor of Cerinthus."[1] The assertion that they were called "paupers" because they thought "meanly and poorly" of Christ, was merely a way of turning their name into a reproach.[2] The ELCESAITES, or followers of Elxai, who were Ebionites with Essene and Gnostic admixtures, were never more than a small and uninfluential sect.

By the time when St. John wrote his Gospel and Epistles, the question of circumcision, and all the most distinctively Judaic controversies, had ceased to be discussed. They had, at any rate, lost all significance for the Church in general. The Nazarenes and Ebionites had at best but a local influence. Even the Nicolaitans are charged, not with heresy, but with immoral practices, and with teaching indifference to idolatry by the ostentatious and indiscriminate eating of meats offered to idols.[3] This tendency to Antinomianism was the natural result and the appropriate Nemesis of that extravagant legal rigorism to which the Judaists strove to subjugate the Church.

2. The two heresiarchs who came into most dangerous prominence in the Apostolic age are SIMON MAGUS and CERINTHUS. If any credit can be given to the vague and much-confused traditions as to their tenets, it is clear that those tenets, at least in their germ, were

[1] *Dial. c. Lucifer.* 8; Ps. Tert. *Append. de Praescr.* 48.

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 27.

[3] On the Nicolaitans see notes on Rev. ii. 6, 14, 15. An account of them, taken from Iren. *Haer.* i. 27; iii. 11; Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 29; Epiphan. *Haer.* xxv. 1; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* ii. 20; iii. 4, will be found in Ittigius, *De Hæresiarchis*, l. 9, § 4; Mosheim, *De rebus Christ.* ii. 69. They, like other sects, are charged with cloaking licentious habits under specious names (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* iii. 4; *Constt. Apost.* vi. 8; Ignat. *Ep. ad Trall.* and *ad Philad.*).

strongly and directly condemned in several of the Epistles.

a. Of SIMON MAGUS, "the hero of the romance of heresy," little is known which is not legendary. In the Acts of the Apostles[1] we find him in the position of a successful impostor in Samaria, where the whole population, amazed by his sorceries, accepted his assertion that he was "the Power of God which is called Great." He was baptised by Philip, but proved the hollowness of his religion by being guilty of the first act of the sin which from him is called "simony;"—he endeavoured "to purchase the gift of God with money." According to the high authority of Justin Martyr—who was himself a Samaritan—Simon was a native of Gitton in Samaria.[2] Josephus, in calling him a Cypriote, (if he be speaking of the same person) may have confused Gitton with Citium in Cyprus.[3] Felix made use of his iniquitous agency in inveigling from her husband the Herodian princess Drusilla.[4] He is the subject of many wild and monstrous legends. He is said to have been the pupil of a certain Dositheus, and to have fallen in love with his concubine Luna (Selene or Helena). When Dositheus wished to beat him he found that the stick passed through his body as through smoke.[5] The "sorceries" which he practised are said to have consisted in passing through mountains and through fire, making bread of stones, breathing flames, and turning himself into various shapes. With the money that he offered to St. Peter he purchased as his slave and partner a woman

[1] Acts viii.
[2] Just. Mart. *Apol.* i. 26.
[3] Jos. *Antt.* xviii. 5; xx. 7, § 2. Euseb. *H. E.* ii. 13.
[4] See *Life and Work of St. Paul*, ii. 341.
[5] *Constt. Apost.* vi. 8; Clem. *Recogn.* ii. 31.

of Tyre named Helena.[1] Hence his followers are called by Celsus Heleniani. Irenæus says[2] "that he carried this woman about with him, calling her his first Conception (Ennoia) and the mother of all things. Descending to the lower world, she had produced the angels and powers by which the lower world was made, and had been by them imprisoned and degraded. She had been Helen of Troy, and in her fallen condition was "the lost sheep," whom he had recovered. He himself, though not a man, became a man to set her free. His adherents, he declared, had no need to fear the lower angels and powers which made the world, but they might live as they pleased, and would be saved by resting their hopes on him and on her. Later on he is said to have gone to Rome, and to have met with his end in an attempt to fly, which was defeated by the prayers of St. Peter and St. Paul.[3]

It is clear that Simon Magus was not only a heresiarch, but also a false Christ or antichrist. His notions were partly Jewish and Alexandrian. Philo had spoken of "Powers" of God, of which the greatest was the Logos. According to Jerome, Simon used to say, "I am the word of God, I am beautiful, I am the Paraclete,

[1] Clem. *Recogn.* ii. 31; Niceph. *H. E.* ii. 27.

[2] Iren. *Haer.* i. 23; ii. 9, and comp. Hippol. *Ref. Haer.* vi. 19; Tert. *De Anima*, 34; Epiphan. *Haer.* xxv. 4; Theodoret, *Haer. Fab.* i. 1.

[3] Hippolytus says that he was buried—promising to rise again (*Ref. Haer.* vi. 26). As to *this* legend—which (as we have seen) may have sprung from the attempt of an actor taking the part of Icarus (Suet. *Ner.* 12)—Irenæus, Tertullian, and Eusebius are silent. It is found in Arnobius, *adv. Gent.* ii. 12, and with many varying details in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (vi. 9); Ambrose (*Hexaem.* iv. 8); Sulp. Severus (ii. 41); Egesippus (*De Excid. Hierosol.* iii. 2), &c., as well as in Cedrenus, Nicephorus, Glycas, &c. I have already alluded to the mistake which led Justin Martyr to suppose that he was worshipped at Rome (*Apol.* 11, 69, 91; Tert. *Apol.* 13).

I am the Almighty, I am the all things of God;"[1] and Irenæus says that he spoke of having appeared to the Jews as the Son, to the Samaritans as the Father, and to the Gentiles as the Holy Spirit. Hippolytus gives an account of his opinions from a book called *The Great Announcement* (*Apophasis Megale*), which, though it can hardly be his, may be supposed to express the views of his followers. The views there stated resemble those of the later Gnostics and Kabbalists. The "Indefinite Power" is described as Fire and Silence. This Fire has two natures, the source respectively of the Intelligible and the Sensible Universe. The world was generated by three pairs of roots or principles—namely, Mind and Consciousness, Voice and Name, Reasoning and Thought; and the Power in these roots is manifested as "he who stands," or who shall stand—by which he seems to mean himself as the perfect man. It is clear that in these roots we see the germ of the Gnostic Aeons and the Kabbalistic Sephiroth—the object of which, like that of every Gnostic system of emanations, was to separate God as far as possible from man and from matter. The inmost conception of Gnosticism is contradicted—its very basis is overthrown—by the words of St. John's Gospel, "The Word became flesh."

b. The name of CERINTHUS is less mixed up with fantastic legends; but the accounts given of his views are full of uncertainty and contradiction, and seem to show that he was one of those who "wavered like a wave of the sea," and was tossed about by every wind of doctrine. Thus it is that he mixed up Millenarianism and other Judaic elements with fancies which were

[1] Jer. *in Matt.* xxiv. 5.

afterwards developed by the most anti-Judaic Gnostics.[1] Thus, too, he has been credited with the authorship of the Apocalypse, though, in accordance with early Church tradition, he was the very teacher against whom the later writings of St. John were specially aimed.[2]

Of his personal life scarcely anything is known. It is conjectured that he must have been a Jew by birth, but he had evidently been trained in Egypt,[3] and he certainly taught in Asia. The name *Me*rinthus, which is sometimes given him, is probably a nickname, since the word means "a cord." But even his date is uncertain. He is usually believed to have taught in the old age of St. John; but Tertullian places him after Karpokrates, who did not flourish till the reign of Hadrian, A.D. 117.

His errors, as noticed by Irenæus,[4] are as follows:—

(1). He declared that the world was made by a Virtue or Power far inferior to the Essential Divinity.

(2). That the human Jesus was not born of a virgin, but was the son of Joseph and Mary, and that he only differed from men in supreme goodness.

(3). That the Divine Christ only descended upon Jesus at His baptism;[5] and—

(4). That, when Jesus suffered, the Divine Christ flew back into His Pleroma, being Himself incapable of suffering.[6]

[1] The assertion of Philastrius (*Haer.* 36) and Epiphanius (*Haer.* xxviii. 2) that he was the person who stirred up the dispute about circumcision at Jerusalem (Acts ix), is an unchronological guess.

[2] Jer. *Cat. Script.* 9, and so too Irenaeus, &c.

[3] Hippolyt. *Ref. Haer.* vii. 33; Theodoret, *Haer. Fab.* ii. 3.

[4] *Haer.* i. 26.

[5] This view was afterwards elaborated by Bardesanes. Valentinus, on the other hand, taught that the body of Christ was celestial, but merely passed through the Virgin without partaking of her nature.

[6] Epiphanius and Theodoret repeat this testimony of Irenæus, and

Besides these errors, he is said to have regarded Jesus as a teacher only, not as a redeemer; to have rejected the Epistles of St. Paul; and to have sanctioned the practice of being baptised for the dead.

Even from these glimpses we can see that he did not exactly deny the Divinity of Christ. The first who is said to have done this was Theodotus of Byzantium.[1] But Cerinthus was evidently actuated by the Gnostic desire to remove as far as possible the notion of any contact, much more any intercommunion, between God and Matter. Now, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation cut at the root of the Alexandrian and Gnostic fancies that Matter was evil, and that God was so infinitely removed from man that he could hold no immediate communion with him. It was the fatal system of Dualism which led to so many heresies. It was the cause of Ebionism, which denied Christ's Divinity altogether; of Docetism, which maintained that the body of Jesus was purely phantasmal and unreal;[2] and it probably lay at the base of Nestorianism, which lost sight of the indivisible union of the human and the Divine in the one God-man. Cerinthus, like other Gnostics of Egyptian training, denied the hypostatic

say that Cerinthus attributed the miracles of Jesus to Christ, whom he represented as identical with the Holy Spirit. Jesus was to Cerinthus only "the earthly Christ," or "the Christ below" (ὁ κάτω Χριστός), while the Divine Christ was "the Christ above" (ὁ ἄνω Χριστός).

[1] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 28.

[2] Clemens of Alexandria (*Strom.* iii. 13) ascribes the invention of Docetism to Julius Cassianus, A.D. 173, but it is clear that the germs of it existed long before, and are even found, as Hippolytus says (*Ref. Haer.* vi. 14), in Simon Magus. It was taught in the Apocryphal Gospel of Peter (Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 23), which was perhaps forged by Leucius, a disciple of Marcion, about A.D. 140. The Docetae were also called Phantasiasts and Opinarians.

and eternal union of the two natures in Christ. He taught that Christ alone was the Son of God, and that until His baptism, and at His crucifixion, Jesus was an ordinary man. In the one pregnant expression of St. John, he "loosed" or "disintegrated Jesus."[1]

Views essentially similar to these are found in all the Gnostic systems.[2] They all sprang from speculations about the origin of evil, and about the method of bridging over the chasm between absolute and finite being. Since they identified evil with matter, they led at once to a Manichean dualism; and it was only by inventing elaborate series of hermaphrodite pairs of æons or emanations that they could imagine any communication of God's will to man.[3] They were all influenced by the Platonised Judaism of Philo[4] and the Alexandrians, as well as by Persian and other Oriental elements of thought.[5] But the deadliness of their system revealed

[1] See *infra*, p. 448.

[2] The name Gnostic—"one who knows"—was first adopted by the Naassenes or Ophites, "alleging that they alone knew the depths" (Hippol. *Haer.* v. 6). Irenæus (*ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 7) calls Karpokrates "the father of the heresy which is called that of the Gnostics" (comp. *id. Haer.* i. 25, 6; see Lipsius, *Gnosticismus*, p. 48). The original sources for the history of Gnosticism are to be found in Irenæus (*adv. Haereses*), Tertullian (*adv. Marcionem, De Praescr. Haereticorum*, and *Scorpiace*), Epiphanius (*adv. Haereses*), and passages of Clemens Alex. and Origen, and Hippolytus Philosophumena. For modern treatises see Beausobre (*Hist. du Manichéisme*), Matter (*Hist. du Gnosticisme*), Burton (*Inquiry into Heresies of the Apostolic Age*), Mansel (*Gnostic Heresies*), and Baur (*Die Christ. Gnosis*). See too Milman, *History of Christianity*, ii. 68; Robertson, *Ch. Hist.* i. 31; Neander, *Ch. Hist.* ii. 82; Gieseler, *Ch. Hist.* i. 114; Burton, *Bampt. Lect.* iv., &c. Later treatises are Ad. Harnack, *Quellen d. Gesch. d. Gnost.* (1873); Lipsius, *Quellen d. ält. Ketzergesch.* 1875.

[3] So Plato, in the *Timaeus*, said that it was the function of the subordinate gods "to weave the mortal to the immortal."

[4] "Haereticorum patriarchae philosophi" (Tert. *adv. Hermog.* 8); "Plato omnium haereticorum condimentarius" (*De Anim.* 23).

[5] Some of the Gnostics referred to Zoroaster. Porphyr. *Vit. Plotin.* 10.

itself in many and in opposite forms. It exalted an imaginary knowledge above a pure and unsophisticated faith. It mistook a terminology for a creed. It confused a manipulation of words with a removal of difficulties. It puffed up its followers with an inflated sense that they were an intellectual aristocracy, possessed of an esoteric teaching which elevated them far above their simple brethren. The doctrine of the inherent evil of matter, and the confusion of "the body" with "the flesh," drove the Gnostics either into an extravagant ascetism, which destroyed the body without controlling it, or into Antinomian license, which destroyed it in the opposite way by shameful self-indulgence. This they excused either on the plea that to the true Gnostic the spiritual was everything, and that anything which his body did was of no moment, since it did not affect his true self; or by arguing that the moral law was only the work of the evil or inferior Demiurge.[1] In both extremes they confused the true nature of sin, turned religion and morality into curious questions, placed salvation in systems of metaphysics, and by vain speculation and verbal analyses lost sight of the practical answer which Christianity had given to all the deepest problems of human life.

These errors existed in their germs from a very early period. We often hear the voice of St. Paul raised in warning respecting them, especially in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, and in the later Epistles. Against their Antinomian develop-

[1] Clemens Alex. (*Strom.* iii. p. 529) points out that they taught extravagant asceticism (*ὑπέρτονον ἐγκράτειαν*), or moral indifferentism (*ἀδιαφόρως ζῆν*).

ments we have the strong denunciations of St. Jude. But St. John lived at a time when they had acquired a more definite consistency. He saw and he declared that all of them began or ended with a denial of Christ, or with errors as to His nature. He discountenanced alike their exaggerated spirituality and the carnality into which it passed. He erected a bulwark against them all in those inspired words which contain the essence of all the truths which are most precious to Christianity, and which form the Prologues of his Gospel and First Epistle. He regards them all as forms of Antichrist. He who denies that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God—in other words, who asserts, as Cerinthus did, that the historical Man Jesus was not in the fullest sense Divine—is an Antichrist in a far different sense than Nero was, and yet in a true sense. St. John tells us this in his usual way, both positively and negatively.[1] He tells us that Jesus is the Christ, and the Son of God, and that the Divine Eternal Being tabernacled in human flesh.[2] He says, in every possible form of words, that Jesus is Christ; that Christ is Jesus; that Jesus is Divine—that Jesus is not a separate being from the Son of God, but indistinguishable from Him. The Gnostics made the Divine "come and go to Jesus like a bird through the air," but St. John testifies throughout Gospel and Epistles, as he had also done, though with less absolute distinctness, in the Apocalypse, that the Divine became Human, and dwelt in our Humanity indivisibly.[3] The Eternal Son of God not only filled the whole person of Jesus, which

[1] 1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 3, 15; v. 1, 10.
[2] 1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John 7.
[3] See Keim, *Jesu von Nazara*, Introd. II. ç.

is Himself, but also filled all believers—who are born of God, not of "the will of the flesh." He fills all life and death and resurrection with Divine life and glory. Yet while thus protesting alike against Psilanthropia—the Ebionite doctrine that Christ was a mere man—and against Docetism, and against the Dualistic theories of incipient Manichees, and against all severing of the Person of Jesus into a Man who is not God, or a God who refuses to be a man—he at the same time makes it clear that he does not identify religion with orthodoxy, but places true religion in love to God shown by love to man. The self-satisfaction of a supercilious orthodoxy which might at any time soar into Pharisaic asceticism, or sink into reckless immorality, is confronted with the assurance—Oh that in all ages the Christian Church had better understood it, and taken it more deeply to heart!—that "he who saith I know God, and keepeth not His commandments," were he ten-times-over orthodox in his asserted knowledge, is yet "a liar, and the truth is not in him;"[1] and that "he who loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."[2]

[1] 1 John ii. 4. [2] 1 John iv. 8.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LATER WRITINGS OF ST. JOHN

"Sumtis pennis aquilæ et ad altiora festinans de Verbo Dei disputat."—JER. *ad Matt., Proem.*

"Transcendit nubes, transcendit virtutes coelorum, transcendit angelos, et *Verbum in principio* repperit."—AMBROS. *Prol. in Luc.*

APART from its own beauty and importance, the Epistle of St. John derives a special interest from the fact that it is the latest utterance of Apostolic inspiration. It is addressed to Churches which by the close of the first century had advanced to a point of development far beyond that contemplated by St. Paul in his earlier Epistles. Many of the old questions which had raged between Judaisers and Paulinists had vanished into the back-ground. The Gospel had spread far and wide. It had become self-evident that nothing could be more futile than to confine those waters of the River of God in the narrow channels of Jewish particularism. The fall of Jerusalem had illuminated as with a lightning flash the darkness of obstinacy and prejudice. It had proved the inadequacy of the Pharisaic ideal of "righteousness," and the ignorance of the system which proclaimed itself to be the only orthodoxy. The liberty for which St. Paul had battled all his life long against storms of hatred and of persecution, had now been finally achieved. St. John himself had advanced to a stand-

point of knowledge far beyond that of the days when he had lived among the Elders of the Church which was dominated by the views and example of St. James. He had learnt the full meaning of those words of the Lord to the woman of Samaria, that the day should come in which men should worship the Father neither on Gerizim or in Jerusalem but everywhere, and acceptably, if they worshipped in spirit and in truth. On the other hand, new and dangerous errors had arisen. Christianity had come into contact with Greek philosophy and Eastern speculation. Men were no longer interested in such questions as whether they need be circumcised; or to what extent their consciences need be troubled by distinctions between clean or unclean meats; or whether they were to place the authority of James or Kephas above that of Paul; or what was the real position to be assigned to the gift of tongues; or whether the dead in Christ were to lose any of the advantages which would be granted at His second return to the living. All such questions had received their solution in the Epistles of St. Paul. Christians as a body were by this time fully acquainted with his arguments, and acquiesced in them all the more unhesitatingly because they had been stamped with irrefragable sanction by the course of History. All men could see the rejection of the once chosen people. Far different were the questions which now agitated the minds of Christian thinkers. They were questions of a more abstract character, relating above all to the nature of Christ. Was He, as the Ebionites maintained, a mere man? Was He, as Cerinthus argued, a twofold personality, the Eternal Christ and the sinless Jesus, united only between the Baptism and the Cruci-

fixion?[1] Or, was He, again, as the intellectual precursors of the Docetæ were beginning to suggest, a man in semblance only—who had but lived in the phantasm of an earthly life? Nay more, men were beginning to speculate about the nature of God Himself. Could God be regarded as the author of evil? Must it not be supposed, as the Manichees subsequently argued, that there were two Gods—one the supreme and illimitable Deity belonging to regions infinitely above "the smoke and stir of this dim spot which men call earth," the other a limited and imperfect Demiurge? Again, what was the relation between these questions and the duties of daily life? Christians were free from the Law; that was a truth which St. Paul had proved. But was there any fundamental distinction between the authority on which rested the ceremonial and the moral law? Might they not regard themselves as free from the rules of morality, as well as from the routine of Levitism? Was not faith enough? If men believed rightly on God and on His Son Jesus Christ, would He greatly care as to how they lived? So argued the Antinomians, and many of them were prepared to carry their arguments from theory into practice. Such, then, were the errors which it became the special mission of St. John to counteract.

But he does not counteract them controversially. The method of Pauline dialectics was entirely unsuited to his habit of mind. That method in its due time and place was absolutely necessary. It met the doubts of men in the intellectual region in which they had originated. It broke down their objections with the

[1] Iren. *Haer.* xi. 7. "Qui autem Jesum separant a Christo et impassibilem perseverasse Christum, passum vero Jesum dicunt . . ."

same weapons by which they had been maintained. But when that work was done there was another way to bring home the truth to the conviction of the universal Church. It was by witness, by spiritual appeal, by the statement of personal experience, by the lofty language of inspired authority. Hence the method which St. John adopts is not polemical but irenical. He overthrows error by the irresistible presentation of counter truths. In the Gospel, as Keim says, he counteracted heresy thetically, in the Epistles antithetically; in other words, in the Gospel he lays down positive truths, in the Epistles he states those truths in sharp contrast with the opposing errors. To those who moved in the atmosphere of controversy "difficulties" loomed large and portentous all around the doctrines of the Church. St. John dealt with those difficulties from a region so elevated and serene that to all who reached his point of view they shrank into insignificance. At the heights whence he gazed men might learn to see the grandeur of the ocean, and to think little of the billows, and nothing of the ripples upon its surface. Hence it has been a true Christian instinct which has assigned to St. John the symbol of "the eagle," in the four-fold cherub of the Gospel-chariot. The eagle which sails in the azure deep of air "does not worry itself how to cross the streams." Dante, in the *Paradiso*, showed no little insight when he called him "Christ's own eagle," and when he describes the outlines of his form as lost in the dazzling light by which he is encircled. "The central characteristic of his nature is intensity—intensity of thought, word, insight, life. He regards everything on its divine side. For him the eternal is already . . . .

He sees the past and the future gathered up in the manifestation of the Son of God. This was the one fact in which the hope of the world lay. Of this he had himself been assured by the evidence of sense and thought. This he was constrained to proclaim: 'We have seen and do testify.' He had no laboured process to go through; he saw. He had no constructive proof to develop; he bore witness. His source of knowledge was direct, and his mode of bringing conviction was to affirm."[1] His whole style and tone of thought is that of "the bosom disciple."[2]

Thus then the one consummate truth which St. John had to offer to the gathering doubts and perplexities of all unfaithful hearts was the Incarnation of the Divine. This is the central object of all faith. This is the one counteraction of all unbelief.

And by the manner in which he set forth this truth—by this presentation to the world of "the spiritual Gospel"[3]—he at once obeyed the divine impulse of inspiration which came to him, and met the natural wishes which the Church had earnestly expressed. The tradition which records that he was urged to write his Gospel by the Elders and Bishops of the Church,[4] is one which has every mark of probability. The generation of the Apostles was rapidly

[1] Westcott, *St. John*, p. xxxv.

[2] This title (ὁ ἐπιστήθιος) was given to St. John as early as the second century. It is found (ὁ ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος τοῦ Κυρίου ἀναπεσών) in Polycrates, Bp. of Ephesus (see Routh, *Rel. Sacr.* i. 15, 37, 370) and Iren. *c. Haer.* iii. 1, 1.

[3] Clem. Alex. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 14.

[4] "Impelled by his friends" (Clem. Alex. *l. c.*). The legend is, that on being requested to write the Gospel, he asked the Ephesian elders to join him in fasting, and then suddenly exclaimed, as if inspired, "In the beginning was the Word" (Jer. *de Virr. Illustr.* 29). Irenæus only says that he was asked to write the Gospel (*Haer.* iii. 1).

passing away. St. John had now long exceeded the ordinary limits of human age. The day would very soon come when not a single human being could say of the Lord "I saw." But *he* could still say this; he had not only seen and heard and gazed upon and handled the Word of Life, but had even been the beloved disciple of the Son of Man. The facts of the life of Jesus had been recorded by the three Synoptists. What the world now needed was some guide into the full and unspeakable significance of those facts. Who was so fit to give it as St. John? nay, who besides him was even capable of giving it with authority? He had hitherto written nothing but the Apocalypse. The Apocalypse had indeed depicted the glory of the Eternal Christ, but it was a book of peculiar character; it was full of symbols; it was difficult of interpretation; it was based on the imagery and prophecies of the Old Testament; it was full of storm and stress. It was the Book of Battle, the Book of the Wars of the Lord; it portrayed the struggles of the Church with the hostile forces of the Jewish and Gentile world; and its celestial visions were interposed between scenes of judgment,

> "As when some mighty painter dips
> His pencil in the hues of earthquake and eclipse."

There were, moreover, many Christian doctrines on which the Apocalypse did not touch, and, above all, it had been written before that divine event which had evidently been the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Christianity. In the final removal of the candlestick of Judaism, the Christian Church had rightly seen the primary fulfilment of those prophecies

which had spoken of the Immediate Coming of the Lord.

To all the living members of the Church, that stupendous event had set the Seal of God to the revelation of the New Covenant. It was the obvious close of the epoch which had begun at Sinai. It was the extinction of the Aaronic in order to establish the Melchizedek Priesthood. It had rendered the system of Jewish sacrifices impossible, in order to show that the one true sacrifice had now once for all been offered. It had been the burning desecration of the sin-stained Temple in order that men might see in the Church of God the new and spiritual Jerusalem which had no need of any temple therein, because the body of every true believer was the spiritual temple of the one God. But to St. John especially that event had come as with a burst of light. It had been, perhaps, the greatest step since the death of Christ in that education for the sake of which his life had been so long preserved. The oral teaching of the Apostle must have been sufficient to show that the gradual revelation which had so long been going on within him had now reached its fulness. The light which had begun to pulse in the Eastern sky over the banks of Jordan had shone more and more towards the perfect day. Was this teaching to be lost to the world for ever? Was it only to be entrusted to the shifting imperfections of oral tradition? Was it to be but half-apprehended by the simplicity, or misrepresented by the limitations, of such men as Papias and Irenæus? How little had the Synoptists detailed respecting the Judæan ministry of which St. John so often spoke! They had not recorded the earliest call of the Disciples, nor the raising of Lazarus, nor the washing of the

Apostles' feet. They had reported some of the public sermons of Jesus, but they had not preserved any memorial of such private discourses as that to Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, or as those divine farewells delivered at the Last Supper. Nor, again, had they spoken of Christ's præ-existence; nor had they used that title of "the Word," which was now so frequently on the lips of St. John, and to which he gave such pregnant significance; nor did they furnish a final insight into the two natures in the one Person of the Son of Man.

It was true indeed, as the Elders and Bishops who urged their request upon St. John would at once have admitted, that as regards the divinity and atoning work of Christ, the knowledge of the Church had been greatly widened and systematised by the teachings of St. Paul. He had brought into clear light the truth that Jesus was not only the Messiah of the Jews, the Prophet, Priest, and King, but that He was the incarnate Son of God, the eternal Saviour of the World; that only by faith in Him could we be justified; that the true life of the believer is merged in absolute union with Him; and that because He has risen we also shall rise.

Yet none could have listened to St. John in his latter years without feeling that, while he accepted the doctrines of St. Paul, he had himself, in the course of a longer life, enjoyed more of that teaching which comes to us from the Spirit of God in the lessons of History. Whilst he gave no new commandment, and had no new revelation to announce, he yet stamped with the impress of finality the great truths which St. Paul had taught. There is not a single doctrine in the writings of St. John which may not be found implicitly and even explicitly in the writings of St. Paul; and yet—

to give but two instances out of many—the Church would have been indefinitely the loser had she not received the inheritance of sayings so supreme, so clear, and so final as these of St. John,—

"*The Father sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world,*" and

"*We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*"[1]

No one, again, had yet uttered such clear words respecting the Divinity and Humanity indissolubly yet distinctly united in the Person of Christ as those which are contained in the Prologue to the Gospel and the opening address of the Epistle, and which are concentrated in the four words, "*The Word became Flesh.*" No one had so briefly summarised the Atoning and Mediatorial work of Christ, as, "*He is the Propitiation*[2] *for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the Whole World!*"

Indeed, as they listened to the white-haired Apostle, men must have felt that there was something in his manner of exposition which tended to remove all difficulties, to solve all apparent antinomies. Take, for instance, the apparent contradiction between the terms used by St. Paul and St. James as to Righteousness by Faith and Righteousness by Works. Would it not cease to be a difficulty—was not the controversy lifted to a higher region—when they heard such words as, "*He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous,*" in connexion with "*Whoso keepeth His Word, in them verily is the love of God perfected, and every one that doeth righteousness is*

[1] 1 John, v. 20.

[2] 1 John ii. 2; ἱλασμός, a unique expression of St. John.

born of Him;" and, "*Behold what and how great love God hath given us that we should be called the children of God*"? Or, again, if men felt the difficulties which rise from the forensic and sacrificial aspects of the Atonement, how would they feel that the forgiveness in the Court, and the cleansing in the Temple, was simplified when it was mingled with the thoughts of the perfection of our sonship in union with the Son of God, and indicated in terms so sublimely final as,

"*If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*"?

The expressions of the New Testament which describe the privileges of the Christian estate fall into three classes, of which one revolves around the word Righteousness; another round the word Sonship; a third around metaphors expressive of Sacrifice. Now let the reader study the First Epistle of St. John, from ii. 29 to iii. 5, and he will find the order there—Righteousness (ii. 29), Sonship (iii. 1), Sanctification (iii. 2—5); but the three are one. The terms of the Court, the Household, and the Temple confirm and illustrate each other. Jesus Christ—the Righteous, the Son of the Father, the Holy One—presides, in the glory of His holiness, over all and over each.[1]

[1] I owe this thought to Dr. Pope's excellent Introduction to his translation of Haupt's *First Epistle of St. John*, p. xxxi.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE STAMP OF FINALITY ON THE WRITINGS OF ST. JOHN.

"Aquila ipse est Johannes, sublimium prædicator, et lucis internæ atque aeternæ fixis oculis contemplator."—AUG. *in Joh., Tract.* 36.

IT is in ways like these—by the use of expressions at once larger and simpler, more comprehensive and more easily intelligible; expressions which transcend controversy because they are the synthesis of the complementary truths which controversy forces into antithesis—that St. John, the last writer of the New Testament, in traversing the whole field of Christian theology, sets the seal of perfection on all former doctrine. This is exactly what we should have desired to find in the last treatises of inspired revelation. And one remarkable peculiarity of his method is that he indicates the deepest truths even respecting those points of doctrine on which he does not specifically dwell. Thus, he does not dwell on the explanation (if the term may be allowed) of Christ's Atonement; he does not offer any theory as to the reason for the necessity or efficacy of Christ's death; yet he involves all the teaching of St. Paul and of Apollos in the words, that "Christ is the propitiation for our sins and for the whole world," and that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." He does not use the words "mediator between God and man," but he sets forth, with a clearness never before attained, that our mediator *is* God and Man. He does not con-

trast God's love with His justice, but he shows that love and propitiation were united in the antecedent will of God. He does not work out the details of Christology, but he so pervades his Gospel and Epistle with the thought that "the Word was God," and that "without Him was not anything made that was made,"[1] as to produce a Christological impression, sublimer even than that which we derive from the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. He does not dwell on the sacraments, and yet in his few words on the witness of the Water, and on the Bread of Life, he brings out their deepest significance. He does not develop the reasons for the rejection of the Chosen People, after the grandeur of their past mission; but he illustrates both no less fully than the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews, when, in his Gospel, he contrasts, step by step, the unbelief of the Jews with the faith of the disciples, and yet records the expression of Christ's eulogy "an Israelite indeed." He records Christ's saying to the woman of Samaria, that salvation—the salvation of which all the Prophets had spoken—was from the Jews;[2] and, in his own words, he writes of Christ's coming to the Jews as a coming to "His own people and His own house."[3] Once more, St. John nowhere enters into any formal statements about the Triune God; yet in whose writings do we see more fully than in his the illustration of St. Augustine's saying, "*Ubi amor ibi Trinitas*," when we hear him say that "God is Love," and that "God is Light;" and that in Christ was

[1] "These words, taken in their widest significance, constitute the signature of the Johannæan writings" (Haupt).

[2] John iv. 22, ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν.

[3] John i. 11, οἱ ἴδιοι . . . τὰ ἴδια. Comp. John xix. 27.

Light, and that Light was the Life of Men; and that all Christians have an Unction from the Holy One, and that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ?

But there are three points in the last writings of St. John which more especially stamp his teaching with the mark of finality.

1. The first of these is the new and marvellous light which he throws on the Idea of Eternity.

The use of the word *aionios*, and of its Hebrew equivalent, *olam*, throughout the whole of Scripture ought to have been sufficient to prove to every thoughtful and unbiassed student that it altogether transcends the thoroughly vulgar and unmeaning conception of "endless." Nothing, perhaps, tends to prove more clearly the difficulty of eradicating an error that has once taken deep and agelong root in the minds of "theologians" than the fact that it should still be necessary to prove that the word eternal, far from being a mere equivalent for "everlasting," *never* means "everlasting" at all, except by reflexion from the substantives to which it is joined; that it is only joined to those substantives because it connotes ideas which transcend all time; that to make it mean nothing but time endlessly prolonged is to degrade it by filling it with a merely relative conception which it is meant to supersede, and by emptying it of all the highest conceptions which it properly includes. I am well aware that this truth will, for some time, be repeated in vain. But, once more, I repeat that if by *aionios* St. John had *meant* "endless" when he speaks of "aeonian life," there was the perfectly commonplace and unambiguous word *akatalutos* used by Apollos in Heb. v. 6, and there were at least five or six other adjectives or expressions which were

ready to his hand. But the Life which had been manifested, which he had seen, to which he was bearing witness, which stood in relation to the Father, and was manifested to us,[1] was something infinitely higher than a mere "endless" life. The life—if mere living be life—of the most doomed and apostate of the human race—the life even of the devil and his angels—is an "endless" living, if we hold that man and evil spirits are immortal. But by qualifying the divine life by the epithet "eternal" (*aionios*) St. John meant, not an endless life (though it *is* also endless), but a *spiritual* life, the life which is in God, and which was manifested by Christ to us. By calling it *aionios* he meant to imply, not—which was a very small and accidental part of it—its unbroken continuance, but its ethical quality. The life is "endless," not because it is the infinite extension of time, but because it is the absolute antithesis of time; and *aionios* expresses its internal quality, not as something which can be measured by infinite tickings of the clocks, but as something incommensurable by all clocks, were they to tick for ever. The horologe of earth, as Bengel profoundly expresses it, is no measure for the *aeonologe* of heaven. The meaning of "eternal" ought long ago to have been vindicated from its popular degradation. St. John is the last of all Scripture writers who uses it; he alone of all Scripture writers defines it; and he makes it consist not in idle duration, but in progressive knowledge. In defining it, he says that it is the gift of Christ, "and that the eternal life is this, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou sendest, even Jesus Christ."[2]

[1] John i. 2.

[2] John xvii. 2, 3. Literally "that they may be learning to know"—

For thus we see at once, that, in the mind of St. John eternal life is an antithesis *not* to the temporal, but to the Seen;[1] that it is not a life which *shall be*, but one that, for the believer, now IS; that "every one who beholdeth the Son has—not shall have, but *has*—eternal life;"[2] that "he who hath the Son, *hath* the life" here and now; and that one of the objects why St. John wrote at all was that they might know that they had it.[3] He who will lay aside bigotry and factiousness and newspaper theology, and will sincerely meditate on these passages, will see how unfortunate is the antique and vulgar error as to the meaning of this word. If a man be incapable of seeing this, or unwilling to admit it, for such a man reasoning is vain.[4]

2. Another mark of finality is St. John's teaching about the LOGOS, or WORD. In the Epistle he enters into no details or description respecting the nature and Person of the Logos; and yet—in accordance with that peculiarity of his method which we have already noticed—the doctrine of the Logos, as the source of all life, is the fundamental matter and pith of the Epistle.[5] This, we may remark in passing, is one of the indications that the Epistle was a didactic accompaniment of

not so much the possession of a completed life as of a life which is advancing to completion.

[1] John iv. 14, 36; vi. 27; xii. 25.

[2] iii. 36; v. 24; vi. 40, 47, 54.

[3] 1 John v. 13, 14.

[4] I should not use language so positive if I had not furnished the most decisive and overwhelming proof of my position in *Mercy and Judgment*, pp. 391—405. Of that proof another generation will be able to judge. From the false and fleeting criticisms of to-day I appeal once more to a diviner standard. I exclaim again, with Pascal, "*Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello.*"

[5] See Haupt, p. 4.

the Gospel. But in the use of the Logos as a distinct name of Christ St. John stands alone. Other Apostles —St. Paul, St. James, and, above all, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews—seem to hover on the verge of it; but they do not actually use, much less do they insist on it; and when they approach it they are thinking always of the Divinity more than of the Humanity—of the glorified, Eternal Christ, and not immediately of the man Christ Jesus. Other writers, again, both Hebrew and Hellenistic, had employed terms which bore some resemblance to it, but not one had infused into it the significance which makes it a concentration of the Johannine Gospel. Philo had repeatedly dwelt on the term, and surrounded it with Divine attributes; but Philo knew not the Lord Jesus, and in Philo the Logos is surrounded with associations derived from the Platonic and Stoic philosophies. The Targums had used the words *Meymra* (מימרא) and *Debûra* (דבורא), which could indeed only mean "the Word"; but in these the use had been intended simply to avoid the rude anthropomorphism of early Hebrew literature, and to make God seem more distant rather than more near. Alike the Alexandrians and the Targumists would have read with a shock of astonishment and disapproval that utterance which St. John puts in the very forefront of his Gospel, as containing its inmost essence, and as solving all the problems of the world, that "the *Logos* became *flesh*." It was a truth far beyond anything of which they had dreamed, that the Word—who was in the beginning, who was with God, who was God, by whom all things were made, in whom was life, which life was the light of man—that this Word was in the world, came to His own people and His own home, and was

by most of them rejected—that this WORD BECAME FLESH, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, a glory as of the only-begotten from the Father —full of grace and truth. To make such a use of the word Logos was to slay those conceptions which lay at the heart of the Alexandrian theosophy with an arrow winged by a feather from its own breast. It was to adopt the most distinctive watchword of the Philonists in order to overthrow their most cherished conceptions.

3. I see yet another mark of Finality in what St. John says of GOD, and especially in the First Epistle. It is not indeed possible to make the whole analysis of the Epistle turn on the three great utterances—definitions we dare not call them, yet approximations to some description of the Essence of Him who is Divine —that God is Righteous, that God is Light, and, above all, that God is Love. But I regard it as a most blessed fact, that words so full of depth and blessedness should occur in what is practically, and perhaps literally, the latest utterance of Holy Writ.

"GOD IS RIGHTEOUS," and therefore He hates all unrighteousness in others, and there can be no unrighteousness in Him. Unrighteousness, masking itself as righteousness—unrighteousness putting on as its disguise the flaming armour of religious zeal—unrighteousness in the form now of persecution, now of violence, now of scholastic orthodoxy, now of depreciation, unfairness, and slander—has been again and again represented as doing Him service. But because He is righteous He hates it. Whether it take the form of Inquisitorial cruelty or of anonymous falsehood, all violence is hateful to Him. Lying for God is to God an

abomination, even when the lie claims to be a shibboleth of His most elect. Want of candour, want of gentleness, want of forbearance, are unhallowed incense which does but pollute His altar. Notions that represent Him as a God of arbitrary caprice, treating men as though they were nothing but dead clay, to be dashed about and shattered at His will—notions which represent His justice as something alien from ours, and those things as good in Him which would be evil in us—notions which imagine that in His cause we may do evil that good may come—those idols of the School are shattered on the rock of the truth that God is Righteous.

"God is Light."[1] Notions that represent Him as taking pleasure in man's blind and narrow dogmatism, self-satisfied security, and bitter exclusiveness — as making His chosen and His favoured ones not of earth's best and noblest, but of the wrangling religionists who claim each for his own party the monopoly of His revelation—as though one could love the dwarfed thistles and the jagged bents better than the cedars of Lebanon—these idols of the fanatic, idols of the sectarian, idols of the Pharisee, are shattered by the ringing hammerstroke of the truth that God is Light.

God is Love. The words do not occur in the Gospel, and yet they are the epitome of the Gospel, and the epitome of the whole Scriptures, and the epitome of the history of mankind; and as such they are a standing protest against all that is worst and darkest in many of

[1] Rabbi Simon Ben Jehosadek asked R. Samuel Ben Nachman "from what the light was created?" He answered, in a whisper of awe, "God wrapped Himself in light as in a garment, and caused its bright glory to shine from one end of the world to the other" (Bereshith Rabba, ch. iii.).

the world's schemes of inferential theology. God is Love—not merely loving, but Love itself. The notions, therefore, which would represent Him as living a life turned towards self, or folded within self, caring only for His own glory, caring nothing for the endless agonies of the creatures He has made, predestining them by millions to unutterable torments by horrible decrees, regarding even the sins of children as infinite, "drawing the sword on Calvary to smite down His only Son"—these idols of the Zealot, idols of the Calvinist, idols of those who think that they by their wrath can work the righteousness of God, and that they "can deal damnation round the land on each they deem their foe,"—these idols of the Inquisitor, idols of the persecutor, idols of the intolerant ignorance of human infallibility, idols of the sectarian newspaper and the religious partisan, are dashed to pieces by the sweeping and illimitable force of the truth that God is Love.

And, therefore, those three final utterances of Revelation will become more and more, we trust, the protection, the emancipation, the precious heritage of all mankind; they will be the barrier against wicked persecutions, against unjust calumnies, against savage attacks of sectarian hatred. They are as a charter of Humanity against the misrepresentations of religion by misguided Infidelity—against its no less perilous perversion by the encroachments and usurpations of religious hatred and religious pride.

4. We may see a last mark of finality in the *simplification* of the ultimate essential elements of Christian truth which we find in St. John. In reading St. Paul we are at once struck with the richness and variety of the terms and phrases which he has introduced into the

statement of Christian dogma. St. John, on the other hand, moves in the sphere of a few ultimate verities. St. Paul is like a painter who works out his results by the use of many colours, and with an infinitude of touches; St. John produces the effect which he desires by a few pure colours and a few sweeping, but consummate strokes. St. Paul is discursive, St. John intuitive. St. Paul begins with man, St. John with God. In other words, St. Paul passes from anthropology to theology, and St. John moves chiefly in the purely theologic sphere. St. Paul reasons most respecting the *righteousness* of God and how it becomes the justification of man; St. John's aim is to show the nature of Eternal *Life*, and how man participates therein. Hence the different tone of their moral teaching. The aim of St. Paul is human and practical, and he dwells incessantly on Faith, Hope, and Charity. St. John's Divine idealism is mainly occupied with the abstract conceptions of Love, and Life, and Light. St. Paul is pleading with men as they are, and building them up into what they should be. St. John assumes that the Christians to whom he writes are resting with him in the full knowledge of Christ. The Churches of St. Paul are full of disturbing elements; the Church which St. John mentally addresses is the true and inner Church, which has no new doctrine to learn, which has received the unction from the Holy One, and which is separated by an unimaginable abyss from the world and from its own false members.[1] St. Paul is ever yearning for an ultimate fraternity of all men, a universal and absolute triumph of the work of redemption; St. John fixes his eyes on the Perfect Church and the Perfect Christian, with whom the

[1] 1 John ii. 20; iii. 14; v. 15.

virulence of evil and the ultimate destiny of evil seem to have no immediate concern.[1]

5. Now we cannot suppose that these blessed and mighty thoughts occurred for the first time on St. John's written page. They must have been previously expressed in his oral teaching. And would it have been strange if—after having heard so much about the Life of Christ, so much about His nature and person, so many of His discourses, so many applications of the truth of His Gospel to meet every phase of moral temptation and philosophic difficulty—the Bishops and Elders came to St. John to urge him, before he died, to set forth his testimony to the world in writing? At first he shrank from so solemn a task out of humility.[2] But on their still pressing him, "Fast with me for three days," he answered—so runs the deeply-interesting tradition preserved for us in the Muratorian fragment —"and let us tell one another[3] any revelation which may be made to us severally (for or against the plan). On the same night it was revealed to the Apostle Andrew that John should relate all in his own name, and that all should review his writing." "And then," says St. Jerome, in his allusion to this tradition, "after the fast was ended, steeped with inspired truth (*revelatione saturatus*), he indited the heaven-sent preface, '*In the beginning was the Word.*'"[4]

[1] See the able essay, "*Paul et Jean,*" in Reuss, *Théol. Chrét.* ii. 572—600.

[2] Epiphan. *Haer.* li. 12, διὸ ὕστερον ἀναγκάζει τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα παραιτούμενον . . . δι' εὐλάβειαν καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνην. Comp. Euseb. iii. 24 (ἐπαναγκές), and Jer. *Prol. in Matt.* ("*Coactus* ab omnibus pæne tunc Asiae episcopis," &c.).

[3] This seems to be the meaning of *alterutrum*, as in the Vulg. of James v. 16 (Westcott, *Hist. of Canon*, p. 527; *St. John*, p. xxxv.).

[4] Jer. *Comm. in Matt.* Prol. Comp. Clem. Alex. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.*

Such, then, having been the origin of the Gospel, it supplies us with a certain clue to the origin of the Epistle. A mere glance at the two writings shows that, on the one hand, there is the closest possible connexion between them, and that, on the other hand, the Gospel was the earlier of the two.[1] For the Gospel contains the more explicit, the Epistle the more allusive and concentrated expressions. The Gospel is intelligible by itself; the Epistle would hardly be intelligible without some previous instruction to explain its phraseology. The Gospel shows us how various expressions originated; the Epistle adopts, generalises, and applies them. The Gospel furnishes us with a history, inspired throughout by certain immanent ideas; the Epistle assumes those ideas to be known, and points out their practical bearing. The Gospel deals with the manifestation of the Word in the flesh as an event which the Evangelist has actually witnessed in all its phases; the Epistle shows how that

vi. 14. But see Basnage, viii. 2, § 6. This was afterwards improved into the story that he wrote the whole Gospel impromptu (*αὐτοσχεδιαστί*), and that his autograph, in letters of gold, was preserved in the Church of Ephesus (see Lampe, *Proleg.* p. 171).

[1] The reader will find the proof of this placed visibly before him if he will study the parallels between the Gospel and the First Epistle of St. John, as gathered (among others) by Canon Westcott, in his edition of the Gospel. There are no less than thirty-five such passages, and it may be seen at a glance that they are neither borrowed nor imitated, but independently introduced in the way which would be most natural in two works written by the same author. More than half of the parallels are drawn from the last discourses (John xii.—xvii.). To me it seems clear that the Epistle represents the later, less developed, and more allusive form of expression. Reuss says that the Gospel is needed as a commentary on the Epistle; but it is at least equally true to say that the Epistle is needed as an application of the Gospel. It is clear that both gain indefinitely when they are read together. St. Clemens implies that the Epistle was written after the Gospel, for he says that "the Epistle begins with a spiritual proem, *following that of the Gospel*, and in unison with it" (*Adumbratt.* p. 1009).

event bears on the errors which were beginning to creep into the Church, and on the lives of its individual members.

We may, therefore, safely conclude that the Epistle had distinct reference to the Gospel; but we may also infer that they were published together, or in very close succession. The Epistle implies that the truths of the Gospel are known to the reader with all the freshness of recent study. It is based upon them as though they would be already prominent in the reader's mind. This is explicable if we suppose that the one treatise accompanied the other, and it would also account for the absence of salutation and benediction, which would only partially be accounted for by the encyclical character of the Epistle. The Epistle is most easily understood if we suppose it to be addressed not only to the Churches of Asia, whom the Apostle may have had primarily in view, but to all readers of the Gospel. The external proof of this is indeed insignificant; but it is sufficiently established by internal probability. If we may accept with reasonable confidence the tradition that the Gospel, as well as the Apocalypse, was written in Patmos and published in Ephesus, the same tradition will apply to the Epistle also.[1] And this would be a further light on the absence of salutations. Patmos is a small and rocky island, with few inhabitants. It is doubtful whether it had any Christian community within its narrow limits; but even if it had, such a community would be all but wholly unknown, and could hardly be regarded as an organised Church.

[1] Patmos was within a day's reach of Ephesus, and if St. John had already felt that the loneliness of the island was suitable to meditation, he might have been led to retire thither once more while he was meditating on his last and greatest work.

6. The only supposed clue as to the readers to whom the Epistle was addressed is the curious statement of St. Augustine, in one single passage, that it was written "to the Parthians." It is clear that this is either a misreading, or a blunder. If, however, it be a misreading, all the conjectural emendations of it have been quite unsuccessful. Hug's supposition, that it crept in by mistake from the superscription of the Second Epistle, "*pros parthenous*," "to Virgins," will be considered farther on.[1]

7. The supposition that the Apostle wrote in Patmos well accords with the whole *tone* of the Epistle. It was written evidently at a time when the Church was not under the stress of special persecutions.[2] Dangers and sufferings are not alluded to; there are no trumpet-calls to courage or endurance. This period of peace may have been due to the crushing destruction which had now fallen on the Jewish nationality; for, as we are again and again informed, both in history and in Scripture, the deadly animosities of the Gentiles were in the early days stirred up for the most part by Jewish hatred.[3] Now in the Epistle there

[1] See *infra*, on the Second Epistle.

[2] This would point to some date after the reign of Nero (A.D. 54—68). We see further that it must have been written, as the Gospel was, after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), and either before the persecution of the Christians in A.D. 95, during the reign of Domitian (A.D. 91—96), or between that date and the persecution of the Christians in the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98). Ewald (*Die Johan. Schriften*, i. 471) suggests A.D. 90 as a probable date. Canon Westcott says that the Gospel may be referred to the last decennium of the first century, and even to the close of it (*St. John*, p. xl.). This view is supported both by early tradition and by the facts that (1) the Gospel assumes a knowledge of the substance of the Synoptic narratives; (2) it deals with later aspects of Christian life and opinion than these; (3) it corresponds with the circumstances of a new world (*id.*, pp. xxxv.—xl.).

[3] Acts xvii.; 1 Thess. i. 14—16; ii. 15; Phil. iii. 2, &c. See too the remarks of Justin in his *Dial. c. Tryph.*

is no distinct reference either to Jews or Gentiles. All the old questions between the Church and these two great masses of mankind have sunk out of sight. The controversies as to the relations which should subsist between Jewish and Gentile converts within the limits of the Church itself are regarded as settled. In the eyes of St. John there are but two great existing communities, and those are not Jews and Gentiles, but the Church and the world. The severance between them is complete and absolute. In this respect, as in so many others, the Epistle recalls the last discourses of our Lord. In them, too, the hatred of the world means that of the Jew no less than that of the Gentile. But this hatred is here calmly assumed without being dwelt upon. There is no complaint respecting it. Not a word is said as to its origin; not a hint is breathed as to its issues. The world is not even spoken of as a source of special temptation, or as a sphere for missionary activity. It is simply set on one side as a satanic kingdom, a kingdom of darkness and of death, with which it is impossible to conceive that the Christian should have anything to do. But such a view is little possible to one who lives in the heart of great cities, and is in daily struggle with hostile forces from without. It would be far more possible to the contemplative recluse in some secluded retirement than to the toiling Apostle in the streets of Sardis or Ephesus.

8. Yet there *are* dangers which St. John evidently contemplates. They are dangers from heresy and from antichrists; dangers not arising from attacks of the world outside the Church, but from developments of the world within it. The perils which the Christians have to encounter are perils from those who them-

selves profess the faith; from wolves—clad in sheep's clothing; from Satan—disguised as an angel of light. What St. John dreads is not flagrant wickedness and open blasphemy, but "false types of goodness," and "false types of orthodoxy." Such perils had existed from the very earliest days in which the Church was a Church at all; but now, in the pause from outward assault, they were assuming subtler and more seductive forms. In one shape or other, in their moral or their intellectual aspects, every Apostle has lifted up against them his warning voice. St. Paul had been obliged, even weeping, to warn his converts against false teachers; St. Peter, St. Jude, St. James had "burst into plain thunderings and lightnings" against them. Far different is the tone of St. John. That they are greatly in his thoughts is evident. Nay, since he frequently refers to their several tenets, since in two passages he expressly names them,[1] since the very last words of his Epistle refer to them,[2] it is clear that it was one of his primary objects to protect the Church from their insidious teachings. Yet how instructive is the tone in which he speaks about them! It is calm, not tumultuous or agitated. It leads to the establishment of positive truths, not to anathemas against negative errors. It does not betray the least touch of anxiety. What St. John has to teach is the nature of eternal life; its concentration in the Word; its communication to the world. The passages about the antichrists might even be omitted without materially affecting the structure of the Epistle. • Here again we find not only the stamp of finality, on which we have already dwelt, but an indication of the circumstances under which St. John

[1] 1 John ii. 20—26; iv. 1—6. [2] 1 John v. 21.

was writing. He is not in the thick of the battle. His soul is not harrowed by daily watching the ravages of error. Removed from the scene of conflict, living in daily meditation on the truth, in daily communion with God, he can write in the tone of serene joy, of sovereign conviction. It is the peculiarity which we have already noticed in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. The keynote of that letter is joy. In the prison, amid general desertion, left face to face with God, St. Paul seems as if the one thought which inspires his whole being is "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say Rejoice." It is the same with St. John. He speaks with the composure which befits the last of the Apostles, the composure of a man who knew the certainty, who had witnessed the victories of the faith. "The unique consciousness which an Apostle, as he grew older, could carry within himself, and which he, once the favourite disciple, had in a peculiar measure; the calm superiority, clearness, and decision in thinking on Christian subjects; the rich experience of a long life steeled in the victorious struggle with every unchristian element; and a glowing language lying concealed under their calmness, which makes us feel intuitively that it does not in vain commend us to love, as the highest attainment of Christianity—all this coincides so remarkably in this Epistle, that," —in spite of its purely impersonal character and the lofty delicacy with which, as in the Gospel, the writer retires into the background, unwilling to speak of himself—"every reader of that period, probably without any further intimation, might readily determine who he was."[1] In its "unruffled and heavenly repose, it

[1] Ewald, *Die Johan. Schriften*, i. 431.

appears to be the tone not so much of a father talking with his beloved children, as of a glorified saint speaking to mankind from a higher world. Never in any writing has the doctrine of heavenly love, of a love working in stillness, a love ever unwearied, never exhausted, so thoroughly proved, and approved itself, as in this Epistle."[1]

[1] *Id. ib.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIND AND STYLE OF ST. JOHN.

"Columba sancta Ecclesia est; quae duas alas habet per dilectionem Dei et proximi."—A. DE ST. VICTORE.

THE effect which the Epistle thus produces upon us is due partly to the habit of St. John's mind, partly to the peculiarities of his style.

1. One great peculiarity of his mind—on which we have already incidentally touched—is his *contemplativeness;*—what has been sometimes, but not very accurately, called his mysticism. It was the invariable tendency of his mind in these his later years to live and move in the region of abstract thought. The abstractions are, however, by no means treated *as* abstractions, but rather as facts and experiences of life. In St. John we see yet another illustration of the fundamental distinction between the Nominalist and the Realist;—the Nominalist who regards abstract terms as representing nothing but the generalisations of the mind out of concrete presentments, the Realist who regards them as representing those eternal ideas which are the only absolute realities. St. John is entirely a Realist. It has been truly said of him that "*Universalia ante rem*" is the principle of all his philosophy. With him Ideas—Light, Darkness—Truth, Falsehood—are not mere concepts, but are the actual reality, the principles of life out of which all individual things emerge.

In his point of view Mankind, the individual man, the particular action, only exist as the Idea prescribes. The Idea, indwelling in them, moulds them as a law, by virtue of which all that belongs to them is fashioned. Thus, to St. John, history is the invisible translated into the visible.[1] In the Gospel it is shown how the ideas have been introduced into this earthly life; in the Epistle how the life of the individual may be modified in accordance with them.[2] Thus once more we see how every thought which St. John utters depends upon his doctrine of "the Word made flesh." The Divine ideas of which he speaks—Truth, Life, Light—are realities, and the only realities, because they are inherent in the Logos. They are in men only because He is in men, and they are the only Life, the only Light, the only Truth. The Gospel shows how, by the manifestation of the Logos on earth, the fulness which was in Him is imparted to us; the Epistle speaks throughout of our personal appropriation of this fulness and the way in which it is expressed in Christian lives.

2. But all this at once accounts for another of his characteristics—namely, the sovereign calm of the Apostle's tone. In this region of the Idea there is no room for jarring conflicts. He is building the superstructure, not laying the foundation. He is reminding, not instructing. He is perfecting, not commencing. He is stating, not arguing. He is delivering a solemn homily, not conducting an embittered controversy. He can appeal to his readers, as those who know;[3] as

[1] Haupt, pp. 376, 377.

[2] "The Gospel seeks to deepen faith in Christ, the Epistle sets forth the righteousness which is necessary to faith, and only possible to faith" (Hoffmann).

[3] 1 John ii. 12—14.

those whose sins have been forgiven; who have an unction from the Holy One;[1] who already believe;[2] to whom the new commandment can be represented as the old. And this is the reason why his defensive polemics can take the form of positive instruction. He can teach true Christians to conquer heresy by the expulsive power of right affections. He can invigorate their interior life as the best means of strengthening their outward warfare. The multiplication of antichrists was a serious danger, but the Churches would be less likely to succumb to it if he could inspire them with the victorious tranquillity with which he himself regarded all dangers, as he looked forth on the troubled sea from the haven of his island rest.

3. A third secret of St. John's power lies in his *style*. It is a style absolutely unique, supremely original, and full of charm and sweetness. Under the semblance of extreme simplicity, it hides unfathomable depths. It is to a great extent intelligible to the youngest child, to the humblest Christian; yet to enter into its full meaning exceeds the power of the deepest theologian. Thus, St. John remarkably exemplifies the definition that genius is "the heart of childhood taken up and glorified in the powers of manhood." In his Gospel and Epistles the artless ingenuousness of a child is intimately blended with the deep thoughtfulness of a man. But the style, by its very characteristics, would be ill suited to controversy. It is not syllogistic, like that of St. Paul; nor rhetorical, like that of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is rather contemplative, "noting the substance of the thoughts without marking the mutual

[1] 1 John ii. 20, 27. [2] 1 John v. 13.

relations of the thoughts themselves."[1] The logic moves, as has been said, in circles rather than straight onwards.[2] The sentences are ordinated by simple conjunctions, not subordinated to each other by final particles. The periods are *paratactic*, not syntactic. The particles, as in Aramaic, are few.[3] Hence, though the Greek is pure, in so far that it is free from solecisms, it is as unlike Greek as possible in its periodic structure. There is scarcely a single oblique sentence throughout St. John's Gospel. Often the sentences follow each other without any conjunction between them, and only by taking up again the chief word in the previous clause. But under the appearance of incessant repetitions the thought is still constantly advanced. "The still waters," as Herder says, "run deep, flowing along with the easiest words, but the profoundest meaning." The thoughts are pressed home in the simplest fashion of Aramaic idiom by being expressed first positively, then negatively.[4] They gain

[1] Braune calls it "the dialectics of contemplation."

[2] Düsterdieck. Tholuck had already given to St. John's style the epithet "cycloidal." Renan admits that the style has "fervour, and occasionally a kind of sublimity, but withal something inflated, unreal, obscure—an utter want of *naïveté*."

[3] Ebrard, *Introd.* He points out that the sentences are often joined by καί, when St. Paul would have used δέ or γάρ. St. John constantly makes use of *anaphora*, *i.e.*, the introduction of a new sentence by the repetition of a word which has just been used. Erasmus excellently describes it: "Dicendi genus ita velut ansulis ex sese cohærentibus contextus, nonnunquam ex contrariis, nonnunquam ex similibus, nonnunquam ex iisdem subinde repetitis . . . ut orationis quodque membrum semper excipiat prius, sic ut prioris finis initium sit sequentis."

[4] St. John seems to "think in antitheses." It is his manner "to construct the matter of a positive idea out of its combination or contrast with its opposite." By a curious variation of style, for which it is not easy to account, we have conditional sentences ("if we walk," "if we say," "if we confess") in the first section of the Epistle (i. 6; ii. 8), and participial construction ("he that loveth," "he that saith") afterwards.

further from the numerical symmetry of the clauses into which they are thrown.[1] The same word occurs again and again as the leading word of an entire section until it becomes impressive by the very monotony of its iteration. It is like a stone flung into a smooth lake, round which the ripples widen to the shore in concentric circles. No style could be worse to imitate. In feeble hands it would deserve the charges of weakness, tautology, senility, which have been so idly made against it. On the other hand, no style could better suit the character of a mind absorbed in heavenly contemplation; —of a mind filled with conceptions of a depth so inexhaustible that words, however often repeated, failed to convey the fullness of meaning with which they were charged.

4. But—to revert to the characteristics of St. John's later teachings—it must not be supposed that St. John has no sternness in him. Had such been the case he could not have been the Son of Thunder. Probably the natural character of no man had ever been so softened and ennobled as his had been by the long years of Christian suffering and Christian education; yet the elements of the natural character remained. The essence of St. John's temperament, the foundation of his

[1] There is an interesting specimen of this numerical concinnity of expression in ii. 9—11, where, in steady progression, the first verse has *one* predicate: "He who saith that he is in the light, and hateth his brother" (α) "is in the darkness even still." The second verse has *two* predicates: "He who loveth his brother" (α) "abideth in the light," (β) "and there is no stumblingblock in him." The third verse has *three* predicates: "But he who hateth his brother" (α) "is in the darkness," (β) "and walketh in the darkness," (γ) "and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness blinded his eyes." The symmetry is so absolute in its musical flow and rhythmic balance that even the double clause of the *last* line corresponds to the double clause of the *first*.

teaching, in these his later years, was love; but where there is an intense and perfect love there must also be hatred of all that most offends and injures love; not hatred of men—that becomes impossible—but hatred of all that degrades men into beasts or devils. It is impossible not to feel that there is an accent of intense severity—of a severity even more intense than that of St. James—in such words as,

"*He that doeth sin is from the Devil, because the Devil sinneth from the beginning.*" "*Every one who abideth in Him sinneth not; every one who sinneth hath not seen Him, nor even known Him.*" "*Everyone who doeth not righteousness is not from God, nor he who loveth not his brother.*"[1]

How does such language accord with Christ's unbounded love to sinners, to publicans, to harlots, even to Pharisees? How is it reconcilable with the paternal tenderness, the overflowing love, the gentle tolerance, which breathes through the rest of the Epistle? How is it in unison with certain and universal Christian experience? How is it consistent with St. John's own gentleness to most flagrant offenders? How can it be left side by side with language so apparently contradictory to it as that which urges God's children to confess their sin, and even lays it down that,

"*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*"[2]

Does not the only solution lie in the fact that here too, St. John is moving in the regions of the ideal, and that every sin is, in its ultimate issue, in its final nature, Satanic? As children of God we cannot sin, and children of God we are. We are so by His gift,[3]

[1] 1 John iii. 4—10. [2] i. 8—10. [3] iii. 1.

we must become so by our own act. In so far as we by our own choice are sinners, so far we are not children of God; and if, at the last day—if, in the general and unerring sentence of judgment pronounced upon us—we are declared to be in a state of *permanent and willing sin*,[1] then, in spite of the imparted gift of sonship, we are children of the Devil. The *ideal* of our position as children of God is the impossibility to sin; and a nearer and nearer approximation to this ideal is required of us in actual life. But if to the very end we fall very far short of that ideal, and so might be driven to despair, St. John himself has saved us from any such despair by his previous sayings that if we confess our sins God will forgive them,[2] and that if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins.[3]

5. The personal question indeed remains. "*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in the darkness, we lie.*" "*He who doeth sin is of the Devil.*" "*If any one come to you and bring not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting.*"[4] Are those the accents of the Apostle of Love? Does not St. John by such expressions and such advice reopen the floodgates of party railing, ignorant zeal, malignant

[1] The force of the present tenses, and the alleviation which they introduce into the force of the sentences, must not be overlooked.

[2] i. 9.

[3] ii. 12. We may remark in passing that this word "propitiation" (ἱλασμός) (here and in iv. 10), is one of the very few which introduce into the Epistle conceptions which are not directly touched upon in the Gospels. Another is χρίσμα, the "unction" of the Holy One, in ii. 20, 27. Another is the application of the name Paraclete ("advocate") to Christ (ii. 1), though this is indeed involved in John xiv. 16.

[4] See *infra* in the remarks on this passage.

persecution, bitter intolerance? So, at any rate, those have thought who forget that *hatred* of any kind is the essential note of the world. Those very "texts" have been seized with avidity by the fierce party-spirit which all the Apostles alike so unhesitatingly denounce as godless and anti-Christian. Heated controversialists have revelled in the imaginary license to set aside all the precepts of Christian love which breathe from every page of the New Testament in order that they may, with these texts, bless and approve with sober brows the very sin which is never more deadly or more inexcusable than when it shamelessly intrudes into the sphere of religious life. All that can be said is that such partisans wrest these, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own perdition. These phrases, rightly understood, belong to that sphere of the Ideal and the Abstract in which St. John moves, but in which those do not move who pervert his meaning in order to undo the teaching which he loved best. No texts in Scripture can authorise any man to hate and persecute those who teach the truths which he in his ignorance regards as heresy. St. John's words do not confer on persecuting zeal the attribute of infallibility. They do not exempt religious differences from the realm of Christian charity. If they did, they would have to be themselves overruled as proofs of weakness, because in that case they would run counter to the best and holiest teachings of him who uttered them. Religious persecution, religious intolerance, religious hatred are not religious but irreligious, even if St. John be distorted into their defence. If he did indeed defend them—as he does not—his plea could only be due to the still lingering traces of the Elijah spirit; it could only be ranked with the conduct of

St. Carlo Borromeo, who, after tending the plague-stricken with the gentleness of a saint, persecuted those whom he regarded as heretics with the fury of an inquisitor. The Apostle and Evangelist of Love would have destroyed the very essence of his own divinest work if he had meant—as I believe he never meant—to gratify the meanest and fiercest champions of party in the indulgence of exactly those forms of hatred which have ever been the most virulent, the most ignorant, the most hateful, and the most intense.

6. I will mention only one more characteristic of this rich and profound Epistle, which is, that though it is ethical and didactic, it does not resemble the treatment of ethics by any other of the Apostles. Here, again, the manner of the writer finds a fresh illustration. Other Apostles enter into many details, touch on many successive duties. Not so St. John. In his view two words enclose the whole cycle of moral conceptions. Those two words are Righteousness and Love. Both words have their roots in the divine. God is righteous. God is love. Therefore man must be righteous towards God, and must manifest that righteousness by love towards the brethren. Even these broad conceptions are lost in others still broader—namely, those of Light and Truth. God is Light, and therefore every sin partakes of the nature, and belongs to the realm, of darkness. God is True—*i.e.*, Real, and therefore all sin partakes of the nature of unreality and falsehood. All details, all special applications are involved in this. He who does the truth, he who walks in the light, he who does righteousness, he who confesses the name of Jesus Christ, he who loves his brother—he has eternal life. He will therefore need no instruction as to outward and

individual acts.[1] For him even the Church and the Sacraments, and all ecclesiastical questions of organisation and ritual, may, in St. John's manner, be passed over as "silent presuppositions." He is forgiven; he is cleansed; he is a son of God. His faith in the Divinity of Christ is transposed into life, and his life in Christ deepens his faith in Christ's Divinity. The two are inextricably interlaced. A righteous life is the result of faith, and faith is deepened by a righteous life.[2] He who denies Christ, he who "severs Christ," is of the Devil, and belongs to the lie, the world, the darkness. Thus St. John moves as through the empyrean in the region of absolute antitheses. All controversy is over for him. Like an eagle after one vast beat of his wings, so this "own eagle of Christ"

"Scindit iter liquidum celeres neque promovet alas."

[1] See ii. 27. Hence the constant words οἴδατε (ii. 20; iii. 5, 15), οἴδαμεν (iii. 2, 14; v. 15, 18, 19, 20), γινώσκομεν (ii. 5, 18; iii. 19, 24; iv. 6, 13; v. 2), ἐγνώκαμεν (iii. 16; iv. 16), ἐγνώκατε (ii. 13, 14), γινώσκετε (ii. 29; iv. 2), δοκιμάζετε (iv. 1). Thus the thought that they already know the truth of what he is saying recurs some thirty times. Οἶδα represents knowledge generally; γινώσκω represents "recognition," "experiential knowledge."

[2] Braune (in Lange's *Bibelwerk*), Introd. § II.; Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*, p. 337.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OBJECT AND OUTLINE OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

"Sed Joannes alâ bina
Caritatis, aquilinâ
Formâ fertur in divina
Puriori lumine."—ADAM DE ST. VICTORE.

AFTER these considerations we shall, I trust, be better prepared to understand St. John's object in the Epistle, and how it bears on the circumstances in which the Epistle was written. We shall be better able to understand that it is a coherent whole, and that its purpose is worked out in continuous development.

As to the object, we can have no doubt, because St. John tells it to us quite distinctly in the first four verses. It was to set forth to his readers his witness respecting the Word of Life, in order that he and they might have fellowship with one another in their common fellowship with the Father and with His Son, and that in consequence of this their joy may be full. He expresses the same object in other terms at the end of the Epistle, when he says "These things I have written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life."[1] In pursuing this object he shows that

[1] v. 13. The reading of B is here most probably correct, and the source of the other variations—ταῦτα ἔγραψα (epistolary aorist) ὑμῖν ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Compare the closely-analogous description of the object of the Gospel in John xx. 31.

there can be no fellowship with God without righteousness, rooted in faith and manifested by love; and that the Christian not only *ought* to live such a life, but *does* so, because he is born of God. Thus does St. John refute the antichristian lie which was already prevalent. He would empty these souls of falsehood by filling them with truth. He writes in order that, by fellowship with one another and with God and His Christ—by perfected joy, by assured confidence in their present possession of eternal life—the seductions of the teaching of antichrists may become impossible to souls filled with Christian love.

An analysis of the Epistle, such as may serve to show that it is not merely aphoristic, is perfectly possible. When Calvin spoke of it as containing "doctrine mixed with exhortation;" when Episcopius said that "the method of treatment was arbitrary, and not bound to rules of art;" they had missed its meaning. The art is concealed, but it is consummate. The method is unique, but it is most powerful. It is an entire mistake to speak of the Epistle as "incoherent," as a congeries of scattered remarks about the Divinity of Christ, about the blessings of adoption, about love, and as "briefly touching on other things also, such as being on our guard against impostors, and such matters."[1] Schmid, Oporinus,[2]

[1] "Doctrinam exhortationibus mistam continet . . . *sparsim docendo et exhortando varius est*" (Calvin).

[2] Joachim Oporin, in a Göttingen programme. "*De constanter tenenda communione cum Patre et Filio—i.e., Joannis Ep.* i. *nodis interpretum liberata, &c.,*" 1741. Some have called the Epistle *aphoristic*, which is a misleading term if meant to exclude the notion of a definite plan. The idea seized upon by Oporin is certainly the leading one of the Epistle. So too Lücke—"As the ground and root of all Christian fellowship is the

Bengel, and the other scholars who first endeavoured to prove its consecutive and systematic character, rendered a real service to biblical theology. The student who reads it in the light of some well-considered scheme, will gain more advantage from it than others, even if details of his scheme be untenable. It is, for instance, very tempting to arrange the Epistle under the three heads which are suggested by the three great thoughts that God is Light, God is Righteous, God is Love. I myself tried hard to do so in first studying the Epistle. But though these great utterances throw some light on the order of thought, it is evident that they are not the pivots of arrangement in the mind of the writer.[1] Nor, again, is it possible to analyse the Epistle, as Bengel endeavoured to do, with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, an attempt into which that great theologian was misled by his acceptance as genuine of the verse about the Three Heavenly Witnesses. There is, indeed, as we shall see, a remarkable triplicity in the subordinate divisions, due to the Hebraic training of St. John, and to the rhythm and symmetry of the sacred idioms with which he was familiar. Bengel, of course, rightly saw that the Epistle falls at once into the three divisions of

Exordium, i. 1—4.
Treatment of the Subject, i. 5—v. 12.
Conclusion, v. 13—21.

But the unreality of his other divisions arose from his attempting to analyse the Epistle in the interests of an *à priori* conception instead of following step by step

fellowship which each has with the Father and the Son in faith and love, so this latter necessarily unfolds and exhibits itself in that former."

[1] Huther, who, in his first edition, in Meyer's *Commentary*, adopted an analysis on this plan (at De Wette's suggestion), abandoned it in his second edition.

its own indications. The reason why it is so difficult to analyse, is the extreme richness and fulness of the thoughts, and the manner in which they interfuse each other. I said just now that the leading words of St. John—words expressive of some inexhaustible and abstract idea—might be compared to stones thrown into a lake, which raise around them a far-spreading concentric ripple; but of this Epistle it would be even truer to say that word after word exercises its influence over the surface, and that the innumerable ripples which they create overflow and are influenced by each other, so that the concentric rings of thought are broken and interlaced.[1] Hence it is probable that no analysis will be accepted by any careful student as final or unobjectionable in all its details. Let each perform the task as he thinks best; but for myself I can find no analysis so helpful and thorough as that which has been indicated by one of the latest, and by far the profoundest, expositor of the epistle, Eric Haupt.[2] In

[1] I find that Huther has expressed exactly the same thought under a completely different image. He says that in St. John's style "the leading thought is like a key-note, which he strikes and causes to sound through the derivative thoughts until a new key-note is struck that leads to a new key."

[2] Generally speaking, throughout this and my former books on the New Testament, I have, I trust, shown that my line of thought is always independent; that I have tried in each instance to think and to judge for myself, *nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*. It is right, however, to say that in the exegesis of the First Epistle of St. John I have been guided to an unusual extent by the admirable treatise of Haupt. I have not always agreed with him. At times he seems to me to be over-subtle. I do not always accept his views of scholarship. But though I have also studied the views of many other editors—Huther, Düsterdieck, Ebrard, Braune, Alford, Wordsworth, Reuss, &c.—I have not found in any one of them the depth and insight of this little-known writer. I have, therefore, been *specially* indebted to him, and desire thus generally to express my obligation. From Reuss I have gained scarcely any help. His treatment

giving it, however, I must remind the reader that we do not pretend to imply that St. John, in writing the Epistle, had any such scheme definitely before him, but only that, in the development of the great central thoughts which he desired to impress upon his readers, one general object dominated through all the separate passages, and coloured the particular expressions.

INTRODUCTION, i. 1—4.

A. The main theme—Eternal Life manifested by the Word.

B. Certain assurance of this as an irrefragable truth;—the object of setting it forth being that it is the ground and root of Christian fellowship with God and with one another.

A. ETERNAL LIFE, i. 5—v. 5.

I. The evidence that it has been communicated to us by the Word is *Walking in the Light*, which must show itself—

1. Towards God—in the form of sinlessness (i. 6—ii. 2.)
   - α Sinlessness is effected positively by redemption through Christ's blood (i. 5—7).
   - β Negatively, by forgiveness of past sin (i. 8—10).
   - γ Hortative recapitulation (ii. 1, 2).
2. Towards the brethren—as brotherly love (ii. 3—13).
   - α Keeping God's commandments is union with God (ii. 3—5).

of the Johannine writings in his *Théologie Johannique* seems to be decidedly poor, and far inferior to his treatment of the Epistles of St. Paul. Nor have I learnt much from the wordy obscurity of Braune.

β Love as the new commandment (ii. 6—11).
γ Hortative encouragement (ii. 12—14).

3. By utter severance from the world.
α No fellowship with the world or with Antichrist (ii. 15—19).
β Security by means of the unction from the Holy One (ii. 20—26).
γ Recapitulation (27).

II. If we possess Eternal Life we have confidence, because we have been born of God (ii. 28—v. 5).

1. The evidence of this sonship is seen in action (iii.).
α Towards God it is evidenced by doing righteousness (iii. 1—10).
β Towards the brethren, by love (iii. 11—18).
γ Recapitulation (iii. 19—23).

2. The source of this sonship is the reception of the Spirit of God.
α The confession of Christ through the Spirit saves us from false Spirits (iv. 1—6).
β Human love is a reflection of the Divine, and is derived from the Spirit (iv. 7—12).
γ Recapitulation (iv. 14—16).

Retrospective conclusions:—when the Divine birth is thus manifested in action (iii.), which may be traced back to the Spirit, (iv. 1—6), then we have the perfect confidence of sonship, and may stand unabashed in the Day of Judgment (iv. 17, 18).

III. Final illustrations.

A. Love and Faith.
α The Idea of Love embraces love both to God and to the brethren (iv. 19—21).

β The Idea of Faith involves love both to God and to the brethren (v. 1—3).

γ And also involves Victory over the world (v. 4, 5).

B. Assurance that the Word is the Giver of Eternal Life.

i. Because it is founded on the certain witness of God (v. 6—9).

ii. And this witness is echoed from within (v. 10—12).

C. Conclusion.

α The substance of Eternal Life, as consisting of faith in Christ, and confidence, and intercessory love (v. 13—17).

β The signatures of the child of God (v. 18—20) in the threefold knowledge that he is sinless, that he is from God, that he is in Christ.

γ Emphatic conclusion, showing the practical aim of the Epistle.[1]

I have inserted this formal analysis of the Epistle into the text, and not placed it in a note, because of its great importance, and because it illustrates to no small extent the characteristics of St. John's method, and the colouring of his thoughts. Some may be inclined to look on it with suspicion, from the very fact of its prevailing triplicity; and no doubt this might be justly regarded as unfavourable to its reception if we pretended to imply that St. John drew up beforehand any outline of this definite division. Had he done so, it would at

[1] It would only confuse the reader to give the analyses of Hofmann, Ebrard, Huther, &c. Ewald adopts three divisions, i. 1—ii. 17; ii. 18—iv. 6; iv. 7—v. 21. Düsterdieck, closely followed by Alford, who gives his analysis at length, divides as follows—Exordium, i. 1—4; two main sections, i. 5—ii. 28 ii. 29—v. 5; a double conclusion v. 6—13, 14—21.

once have stamped his Epistle with formalism of statement and want of spontaneity. But this is not the case. The triplicity is entirely unintentional. It is so little insisted on, that some of the sections, and especially the minor divisions which I have not here pointed out, fall into pairs. The detection of this involuntary triplicity and duality of statement does not arise from any *a priori* determination to find it, but results naturally from careful study of the Epistle step by step. The very same peculiarity is observable in the Gospel. Any one who analyses it sees at once that there is scarcely one, either of its main or its minor divisions, which does not fall into double or triple parts. This was pointed out by Luthardt, and may be seen by a glance at Canon Westcott's analysis of the Gospel, though he does not expressly allude to it. As to the Epistle, "the order and symmetry which pervade all, down to the minutest details, only show how clearly and sharply the Apostle was accustomed to think, and that, in consequence of an inherent sense of order, his thoughts grouped themselves with facility in a definite way."

The genuineness of the Epistle may be regarded as beyond all suspicion. It was known to and quoted by Papias (A.D. 140).[1] There are unmistakable allusions to it in the Epistle to Diognetus (A.D. 117), in the Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne (A.D. 177), and in Polycarp's letter to the Philippians.[2] It was often quoted by Irenæus.[3] There can be little doubt that the

[1] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 39, κέχρηται . . . μαρτυρίαις ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰωάννου προτέρας ἐπιστολῆς.

[2] Polyc. *ad Philipp.* 7. This quotation constitutes a strong proof of genuineness. [3] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 8; Iren. *c. Haer.* iii. 16, 5, 7.

testimony of the Muratorian fragment (circ. A.D. 170) is in its favour.[1] It is translated in the Peshito; is constantly quoted by the Fathers of the third century; is ranked among the *Homologoumena* by Eusebius,[2] and is said by St. Jerome to have been accepted by all true Churchmen.[3] This external evidence combines so overwhelmingly with the internal, that we are not surprised to find that from the days of Marcion[4] (about A.D. 140) and the Alogi[5] down to the days of Joseph Scaliger, the Epistle has been received with unquestioning reverence.[6] The notion that it shows signs of senility is the superficial conclusion of careless and prejudiced readers. The endeavour of Baur to find Montanism in the Epistle, and that of Hilgenfeld to prove that it is a forgery of the middle of the second century, need be no further debated, because they have found scarcely any followers. And even Hilgenfeld spoke of the writer as "a great independent thinker," and called his Epistle, not as Baur had done, a "weak imitation" of the Gospel, but a "splendid type" of it.[7] The notion that such Epistles as this, and the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians and the Pastoral Epistles could have been second-century

[1] See *infra.*

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 24, 25.

[3] Jer. *De Virr. Illustr.* 9. It is quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus (*Strom.* ii. 66; iii. 32, &c.), Tertullian (*c. Marc.* v. 16; *c. Prax.* 15, &c.) Cyprian (*Ep.* 28, &c.), and pseudo-Chrysostom (*in Matt.* xxi. 23) says, *ἅπαντες εἶναι Ἰωάννου συμφώνως ἀπεφήναντο.*

[4] Marcion either did not know or rejected the writings of St. John.

[5] *τάχα δὲ καὶ τὰς Ἐπιστολάς, συνᾴδουσι γὰρ αὗται τῷ Εὐαγγελίῳ καὶ τῇ Ἀποκαλύψει* (Epiphan. *c. Haer.* li. 34).

[6] The isolated exception of Cosmas Indicopleustes in the sixth century is hardly worth mentioning, for his remark is evidently made in great ignorance of the subject. He foolishly observes that "the majority" regarded the Catholic Epistles as not being the writings of the Apostles; *ἀλλ' ἑτέρων τινων πρεσβυτέρων ἀφελεστέρων.*

[7] Hilgenfeld, *Das Evang. und die Briefe Johannis,* 1849.

forgeries is refuted by the entire literature of thât century, whether authentic, or anonymous, or pseudonymous. That literature is of a character incomparably more feeble, and is animated by a spirit incomparably less divine.

Some have preferred to regard this Epistle as a theological treatise, or a religious homily; but the form which it assumes, and the direct addresses with which it abounds, show that it really was intended as an encyclical letter, addressed neither "to Parthians" nor "to Virgins,"[1] but to the Churches of Asia, with which the Apostle was most familiar. The conclusions which have here been indicated may be considered certain;—namely, that it was written towards the close of the first century; and—which is a deeply interesting and suggestive circumstance—that it was, in some instances, at least, accompanied by copies of the Gospel, to which it is closely related in its tone of thought, and to which it served as a practical commentary.[2]

[1] Thus γράφω occurs seven times, ἔγραψα six times, ὑμῖν, ὑμεῖς, &c., thirty-six times, τεκνία, παιδία six times, ἀγαπητοὶ six times, &c. The unconstrained style, the hortatory tendency, the informal transitions, all point to its epistolary character.

[2] This is the view of Michaelis, Augusti, Hug, Thiersch, Ebrard, Haupt, &c.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

"Ubi Amor, ibi Trinitas."—S. Aug.

"Locuturus est multa, et prope omnia de caritate."—S. Aug. *Expos. in Ep. Johann.*

"The main substance of this Epistle relates to love."—Luther.

"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."—*Ex.* iii. 5.

SECTION I.

ETERNAL LIFE.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we gazed upon, and our hands handled,[1] concerning the Word of Life; and the Life was manifested,[2] and we have seen it, and are witnessing and announcing to you[3] that Life—even that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us. That which we have seen and have heard we announce to you also, that ye also may have communion with us; and indeed our communion is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.[4] And these things we write,[5] that your joy may be fulfilled" (i. 1—4).

[1] Luke xxiv. 39: ψηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε. The word would be the strongest possible refutation of Docetic error. In Ignat. *ad Smyrn.* 4, 5, our Lord says to Peter after His Resurrection, "Take, handle me, and see that I am not a bodiless spirit" (δαιμόνιον ἀσώματον); "and immediately they took hold of Him and believed, convinced by His flesh and His Spirit."

[2] By "the life" is here meant the Absolute Life, ἡ αὐτοζωή, ἡ πηγάζουσα τὸ ζῆν (Schol., John i. 4).

[3] The reading of ℵ is καὶ ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν.

[4] The Holy Spirit is not mentioned, because He is *in* us, rather than *with* us (2 Cor. xii. 13).

[5] "There are two species of testimony—announcement and writing. Announcement lays the foundation: writing builds the superstructure" (Benge

We have here the introductory theme of the whole Epistle. It should be compared with the golden prologue of the Gospel to which it is so closely analogous, and the knowledge of which it assumes.[1] Though St. John seems to be labouring with the desire to express a truth too great for the power of his language to utter, the clause, so far from being, as Calvin said, "abrupt and confused," is to the highest degree pregnant with clear and majestic thought. It compresses into a few lines a world of meaning, while at the same time it is steeped in the deep emotion of the writer.

What he has to announce—for he only uses the plural as one of the Apostolic witnesses—is not the Word,

[1] John i. 1.	1 John i. 1, 2.
Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.	ὃ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς . . . (ἡ ζωὴ) ἥτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα.
Ver. 4.	
ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει.	περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς . . . ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη . . . καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν.
Ver. 14.	
καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ.	ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα.

Others of the ideas found in the prologue of the Gospel occur elsewhere in the Epistle. Thus compare—

i. 1, "The Word was God."	v. 20, "This is the true God."
i. 9, "There was the true light."	ii. 8, "The true light already shineth."
i. 12, "To become children of God."	iii. 1, "That we should be called children of God."
i. 13, "Born . . . . of God."	v. 1, "Begotten of God."
i. 14, "The Word became flesh."	iv. 2, "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."
i. 18, "No man hath seen God at any time."	iv. 12; "No man hath beheld God at any time."

This opening clause of the Epistle resembles that of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the absence of name and greeting, but the majestic beginning of that Epistle is more rhetorical and less emotional.

but something respecting Him—namely, that He is the source from which all life streams. In hearing and seeing Him, the Apostles had heard and seen this inward significance of His Person and of His acts by the immediate perceptions of sense; and in gazing on and handling Him, as they all did, and Thomas especially, after His resurrection, they had learnt, by yet fuller investigation, that He is indeed the Conqueror of Death and the Source of Life. And this Life of His was "from the beginning," so that the announcement of it is as though he were now inspired to write a new Book of Genesis, but one which dated backwards to a yet earlier—nay, to an absolute eternity. Thus the "from the beginning" of the last book of the Bible repeats, but in even deeper tones, the "in the beginning" of the first book. The one speaks of the Incarnation, the other testifies to the Eternity, of Him by whom the worlds were made.

The procem of the Gospel declared that "the Word became flesh," because in the Gospel St. John is treating of Christ's person; but in the Epistle he says, "the Life was manifested," because he is about to deal, not directly with His Person, but with the influence which flowed from it—namely, life. And the quality of that life is that it is eternal, *i.e.* spiritual, supratemporal, Divine, seeing that (ἥτις) it stands in immediate relation to (πρὸς) the Father, and was only manifested to man, in its priority and fulness, when Christ appeared. This was the Life which the Apostles had seen, to which they bore witness as true, which they were communicating to the world, and of which the assurance could be derived from their testimony. And the aim of the announcement is to establish a fellowship between the witnesses

and those who received their witness; for indeed this fellowship is, in reality, a fellowship with God and with Christ. If it be asked how it could be St. John's object to *establish* a fellowship which they possessed already, the simple answer is one which applies to all the writings of the Apostles. They wrote to Christians, who were indeed, as Christians, ideally perfect, but in whom the ideal was as yet very far from having become the real. Ideally they were saints and perfect; in reality they were struggling with daily imperfections, and had not by any means attained the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ. They were, therefore, far from that fulness of joy which was their proper heritage.[1] The Eternal Life which they possessed was as yet but in the germ.

"And this is the message[2] which we have heard from Him, and are announcing to you, that God is Light, and there is not in Him any darkness of any kind. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and are walking in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light,[3] we have fellowship with one another,[4] and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin"[5] (i. 5—7).

[1] Comp. John xv. 11; xvii. 3; Phil. ii. 2. "Quorum gaudium tu ipse es. Et ipsa est beata vita gaudere ad te, de te, propter te" (Aug. *Conf.* x. 22). "The peace of reconciliation, the blessed consciousness of sonship, the happy growth in holiness, the bright prospect of future completion and glory, all these are but details of that which is embraced by one word, Eternal Life" (Düsterdieck).

[2] Ἀγγελία (not ἐπ.), A, B, K, L, &c.

[3] One of the many passages in which there is close affinity between the thoughts of St. John and St. Paul (see Eph. iv. 25; v. 8, 9, 11—14). *We* can only *walk* in the light (Isa. ii. 5), coming into it out of darkness; but the essence and element of God's Being *is* in the Light (φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον).

[4] μετ' ἀλλήλων (א, B, &c.), and not μετ' αὐτοῦ (A), is the better reading. "Christian fellowship is then only real when it is in fellowship with God" (De Wette). "Nisi in bonis amicitia esse non potest" (Cic.).

[5] Col. i. 20; Eph. i. 7; Heb. ix. 14. Christ's Blood, applied by Faith,

Into those words, GOD IS LIGHT, St. John compresses the substance of his message, and utters one of those great final truths, which, since they cannot be transcended, mark the close of revelation. It is not introduced abruptly or disconnectedly, but it requires a knowledge of the Gospel to see its force. There, too, and in the same order, we have—First, the Word (i. 1), then Life (i. 4), then Light (i. 5); and there we see that the Light is the highest manifestation of the Life in relation to men; so that the epitome of the Gospel and the epitome of the Life of Christ, as regards the world, is this—that the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. But, when man receives the Life *as* Light, he also reflects it, and so becomes a child of Light.[1] In these words, therefore, as in "God is Love," St. John sums up all the meaning of his Gospel, although in the Gospel itself neither of the two expressions occurs. Yet Christ is there called Light, because He is one with the Father, and because He manifested the Father as Light. "I," He said, "am the Light of the world."[2]

But what is the *meaning* of this final revelation that God is Light? The only answer which we can give is that, of all existing things, not one is so pure, so abstract, so glorious, so beneficent, so incapable of stain or admixture, as earthly light; and earthly light is but

becomes our Justification, and is also the purifying medium of our sanctification. The verse, as Bp. Wordsworth points out, refutes many heresies —*e.g.*, that of Cerinthus, that Jesus was not the Christ (reading Χριστοῦ); that of the Ebionites, that He was not the Son of God; that of the Docetæ, that the Christ did not really die; that of the Novatians, who denied pardon to deadly sin after baptism; that of the Antinomians, who denied the necessity of moral obedience.

[1] John viii. 12.

[2] John i. 4; iii. 19; viii. 12.

an analogue of the Light which is immaterial and Divine.

> "Hail, Holy Light! offspring of heaven firstborn,
> Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam.
> May I express thee unblamed? since God is Light,
> And never but in unapproached Light
> Dwelt from eternity: dwelt then in thee,
> Bright effluence of bright essence uncreate;
> Or, hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal stream,
> Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the sun,
> Before the heavens, thou wast."

St. John, as is usual with him, follows the positive statement by a negative one, which strengthens and adds to it—"in Him is no darkness whatever." The words furnished an answer, if such were needed, to Manichean dreams; and they introduce the truth that it must be the duty of the Christian TO WALK IN LIGHT, which is the same thing as to live in God. We are surrounded with elements of darkness; but we are not to love it, nor to love the world, which is the sphere of its extension; we are to pass from it, by heart-repentance, into the region of Light, which is the kingdom of God. If we have not done so, and yet profess fellowship with God, our life is a lie. In that case "we lie;" and to this positive he adds the negative, "and we do not the truth." The clause illustrates his manner. It is not a mere antithesis of positive and negative, but the addition of a stronger and partially new clause, after the fashion of Hebrew parallelism. For the word "truth" means something much more than that purely relative conception which we ordinarily attach to the word. We must seek the meaning of it in such expressions as St. Paul's "obeying the truth,"[1] and the words of Jesus, "I

[1] Rom. ii. 8; 2 Thess. i. 8.

am the Truth."[1] It means absolute reality. The Gnostic dreamer—the professing Christian who talks about union with God and yet is walking in darkness, who wilfully deceives himself, who shrinks in hatred from the revealing light—not only says that which is false, but leads a life which is entirely false, and hollow, and unreal—a life of semblance and of death. But if we walk in the light, then our fellowship in light is perfected, and we are cleansed from all sin. In other words, we are sanctified by the blood of Jesus. His blood has won our justification—the forgiveness of our actual sins; His blood—that is, "His power of life working its effects and ruling within us"—is our sanctification from all sin. And to be forgiven, and cleansed, is to have fellowship with one another and with God.

"If we say that we have no sin, we mislead ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.[2] If we confess our sins,[3] faithful[4] is He and Righteous, that He should forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.[5] If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (i. 8—10).

The denial of sin, the assertion of our independence and perfection, is a radical abandonment of honesty. There can be no reality, and, therefore, nothing akin to

[1] John xiv. 6.

[2] The connexion is that we *all* need to be thus cleansed by the Blood of Christ (Iren. *c. Haer.* i., vi. 20). It is at least doubtful whether there is any *special* allusion to Gnostic Antinomian Perfectionists.

[3] Of course St. John means confession springing from true contrition (James v. 16).

[4] True to His Nature and Promise (1 Cor. i. 9; x. 13; 1 Thess. v. 24, &c).

[5] "In the background lie all the details of the Redemption" (Alford). "All sin, original and actual" (Bengel). "Si te confessus fueris peccatorem est in te veritas, nam ipsa veritas lux est. Nondum perfecte splenduit vita tua, quia insunt peccata: sed tamen jam illuminari caepisti quia inest confessio" (Aug.).

the Divine,[1] in the man who makes such an assertion, whether it be dictated by haughty self-sufficiency as to our own virtues, or by Antinomian denial that sin is exceeding sinful. But with consciousness of sin begins the hope and possibility of amendment. When sin is confessed with real contrition to God, and, if needful, to men, then—because God is God, and is, therefore, faithful to His own nature, and because, as a Righteous Judge, He judges uprightly—it is the very object of His righteousness that He should remit our past sins,[2] and renew our whole nature. A denial on our part of past sin gives the lie to all His revelation, and proves that His Word is not in us.

Having thus illustrated the truth that to have fellowship with God is to walk in the Light, and that this involves our deliverance, alike from the *principle* of sin by redemption, and from the *guilt* of sin by forgiveness, he sums up in these words:—

"My little children,[3] these things I write to you that ye may not sin: and if any one have sinned,[4] we have an Advocate[5] to the

[1] In the tract Sanhedrin (f. 64, *a*), there is a story that for three days the Israelites wrestled with the Evil Impulse (*Jetser-harâ*), and said that God had permitted this Evil Impulse, that men might gain a reward by overcoming it. Thereupon a letter dropped from heaven, on which was the word "Truth." Rabbi Chanina said, "From this we *may see that the Seal of the Holy One is Truth.*"

[2] ἵνα ἀφῇ κ.τ.λ. "In this one particle (ἵνα) lies the most comprehensive and the highest witness of God's love that it is possible to conceive" (Haupt, p. 50).

[3] Tradition has also preserved this expression as a favourite one of St. John in his old age.

[4] ἐάν τις ἁμαρτῇ. Si quis *peccaverit* (Vulg.).

[5] The word is used in this sense in the letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne (Euseb. *H. E.* v. 1), where a young Christian—Vettius Epagathus—after begging to be heard in defence of the martyrs, himself received the martyr's crown—παράκλητος Χριστιανῶν χρηματίσας, ἔχων δὲ τὸν Παράκλητον ἐν ἑαυτῷ—"being called the Advocate of the Christians,

Father, Jesus Christ, as Righteous. And He is a propitiation for our sins, but not for ours alone, but also for the whole world"[1] (ii. 1, 2).

The personal address, "my little children," shows the warmth and earnestness of this recapitulation. The aim of all that he has said is that the Christian should not sin; but if that deliverance be impossible in its ideal fulness, if we do fall into sins of infirmity, still, even then—if only we are on our guard that such sins never so master and possess our lives that we walk in darkness—we need not despair.[2] The best of all is not to sin; but if we cannot attain to this, there is a propitiation for sin, by which—an Advocate for us to the Father, by whom—we may gain the blessedness of the unrighteousness forgiven, of the sin covered. That

but having the Advocate in himself." On this word Canon Westcott (on St. John xiv. 16) has one of those exhaustive notes which are so valuable as tending to a final settlement of uncertain questions. The word is only found in the New Testament here, and in John xiv. 16, 26: xv. 26: xvi. 7, where it is rendered Comforter. The double rendering dates from Wiclif, followed by Tyndale and other versions, except that the Rhemish, following the Vulgate, uses Paraclete in the Gospel (Luther has in the Gospel "Tröster," and here "Fürsprecher"). The Latin Fathers use the words *Paracletus, Advocatus, Consolator;* and Tertullian (once), *Exorator.* The English word means not "Comforter" in the modern sense, but "Strengthener." ("*Comfort* is that by which in the midst of all our sorrows we are *comfortati—i.e.,* strengthened," Bp. Andrewes.) The form of the word is passive; in Classical Greek it means Advocate. It is used in this sense by Philo and the Rabbis and early Christian writers. The meaning in this passage is clear, and the use of the word in the sense "Consoler," by the Greek Fathers seems only to be a secondary application (Westcott, *l. c.*). It was necessary for St. John to dwell on the truth that Christ was our *only* Advocate in churches given to Angel worship (Col. ii. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 5).

[1] "Thou, too, art a part of the whole world: so that thine heart cannot deceive itself, and think the Lord died for Peter and Paul, but not for me" (Luther).

[2] "Sed forte surrepit de vita humana peccatum. Quid ergo fiet? Jam desperatio erit? Audi:—si quis, inquit peccaverit," &c. (Aug.).

Advocate[1] is righteous in His nature and a propitiation by His office, so that, in and through Him, we can be acceptable to God.[2] The word "a propitiation" (*hilasmos*) is peculiar to St. John, occurring only here and at iv. 10. It is therefore in the Septuagint that we must look for its meaning, and there it is used as the translation of *Kippurím*, "the Day of Atonement,"[3] just as the corresponding verb to "propitiate," or "make a propitiation for,"[4] is the standing version of *kippér*. It is therefore a sacrificial metaphor, and points to the same series of thoughts which we have already examined in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The word itself stands in close relation to the word *hilasterion*,[5] or mercy-seat, which—sprinkled with the blood of atonement, and dimly seen in the darkness through the clouds of incense—was a type of the means whereby man may stand redeemed and accepted in the presence of God. The emblem and the expression belonged to the Jewish ritual; but, as St. John here adds, Christ's atonement was not only for Jews, not only for believers, but for the whole world. "Wide as was the sin, so wide was the propitiation."

With the third verse of the second chapter, begins

[1] Advocate (as we have seen) not Comforter, is perhaps always the right rendering of Παράκλητος. The word has been adopted by the Talmudists by simple transliteration (פרקליט), and only in *this* sense. This is the only passage in which the title is directly given to the Son; but it is *indirectly* given to Him in John xiv. 16, "I will send you *another* Comforter." Further, St. John generally regards and speaks of *the* Paraclete as the Spirit of *Christ*.

[2] "The righteousness of Christ stands on our side, for God's righteousness is in Jesus Christ, ours" (Luther).

[3] כִּפֻּרִים.

[4] ἱλάσκεσθαι.

[5] Rom. iii. 25 (see *Life and Work of St. Paul*, ii. 209), and see *supra* on Heb. ix. 5

a second section in illustration of the fundamental theme—the *manner*, namely, whereby "walking in the light," as a proof that we have eternal life, is evidenced. It is evidenced, as we have hitherto seen, by sinlessness—that is, by forgiveness from the past guilt of sin (i. 8—10), and deliverance from its present power (i. 5—7). But this is a proof that we are walking in the light with reference *to God*. The Apostle now proceeds to illustrate how such a walk is evidenced *towards men*, and this occupies the section ii. 3—14. In the first paragraph of this section he tells us that it is thus evidenced by keeping God's commandments (3—5); in the second, he proceeds to define all God's commandments as being summed up essentially in one, namely in walking as Christ walked, which (as the whole accompanying Gospel would have already made clear to his readers) was to walk in love, since love is the epitome of this life.[1] This section, then, is an illustration of our "fellowship with one another," as the last was of our "fellowship with the Father, and the Son Jesus Christ;" and thus the two together are meant, directly and consecutively, to promote the object which he has already placed in the forefront of his Epistle"—union with one another and with God.[2]

And since critics have ventured to talk so superficially and irreverently of St. John's tautology and senility, and the loose, inconsequential structure of his Epistle, as though it were (as Caligula said of the style of Seneca)[3] a mere "rope of sand," it may be well to set

[1] John xiii. 34, 35. 1 John iii. 1.

[2] See i. 3.

[3] The shrewd, though more than half-insane Emperor, said that Seneca's style was "*commissiones meras*," "mere display" and "arena sine calce"—"sand without lime."

visibly before the reader a proof of the extreme coherence and symmetry which mark its structure. It may serve to show that when these rude critics fancied that they "understood his ignorance," they were, as critics so often are, merely "ignorant of his understanding." If the reader will open his Bible and refer to the paragraphs i. 5—10 and ii. 3—11, he will find that they present the close and symmetrical parallelism which is indicated below.

Chapter i. 5.	Chapter ii. 3.
Subsection α—	Subsection α—
General statement.	General statement.
Ver. 6—	Ver. 4—
Negative supposition, and two condemnatory conclusions.	Negative supposition, and two condemnatory conclusions.
Ver. 7—	Ver. 5—
Positive supposition, and two declarations.	Positive supposition, and two declarations.
Subsection β—	General statement, ver. 6—8.
Three opposed sentences, ver. 8, 9, 10.	Three opposed sentences, ver. 9, 10, 11.

The symmetry is not slavishly artificial, but it is a very marked characteristic of a careful and meditative style.

"And in this we recognise that we have learnt to know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith I have learnt to know Him, and keepeth not His commandments is a liar, and in him the Truth is not. But whosoever keepeth His Word, of very truth in him the love of God has been perfected. By this we learn to know that we are in Him" (ii. 3—5).

"To know God" is not merely to know that He *is*. In St. John's sense it is to have *full* knowledge of Him.[1]

[1] The word ἐπίγνωσις, however, so common in St. Paul and in 2 Peter, is not used by St. John.

that is, to receive Him into the heart. And *thus* to know Him is to walk in the light, which we cannot be doing if we are not keeping His commandments. Here, then, is a test for us as to whether we know Him or not, a test as to our Fellowship with Him. St. John has already told us (i. 6) that

If we say that we have fellowship with Him,
And walk in darkness,
(α) We lie, and
(β) Do not the truth:

and here, in closest parallel, but in stronger form, he tells us

He that saith I have learnt to know Him,
And keepeth not His commandments,
(α) He is a liar, and
(β) The truth is not in him.

But he who keepeth God's word—the words of Him who was the Word and whose words are spirit and life—is truly Christ's disciple. That word, whether as the personal Logos or as His announcement, is essentially "Love;" and, therefore, in him who keeps God's word the "love of God" has been perfected. Such a man has in himself, as the pervading influence of his life, the love which is in God,—for "God is love."[2] The thought is exactly the same as that expressed by St. Paul, in the Ephesians, where, in the only passage in which he bids us be imitators of God,[3] he tells us to "walk in love, even as Christ loved us." But though the fundamental thought is the same, it is set forth by St. John in a more developed, a more penetrative, and a more final manner. The words, "herein we learn to

[1] John viii. 31. [2] 1 John iv. 16. [3] Eph. v. 1, 2.

know that we are in Him," are a recapitulation, but one which adds to the emphasis with which a truth so important is announced, and serves to perfect the symmetry between this section and the corresponding one in the last chapter.

In the next paragraph St. John gives the central thought, to which he has been drawing nearer and nearer, namely, that the ideal unity of God's commandments is found in brotherly love; and that this, therefore, is the true manifestation of "walking in the light," as expressed towards our brethren in the world.

"He that saith that he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked. Beloved, I write not a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. That old commandment is the word which ye heard. Again a new commandment I write to you;[1] a thing which is a living reality in Him and in you; because the darkness is passing away, and the real Light is already shining. He that saith that he is in the Light, and hateth his brother,[2] is in the darkness even still. He that loveth his brother abideth in the Light, and there is no stumbling-block in him.[3] But he who hateth his brother is in the darkness, and in the

[1] The whole passage is explained in the accompanying comment. It will be seen that I reject the explanation of the commandment as *new*, (1) because continually renewed (Calv.); or (2) "given *as though* it were new" (Neander); or (3) as unknown before Christ came. The commandment is "old" as dating from the beginning of Christianity; new if we look back to all previous ages. See Düsterdieck and Haupt.

[2] By "brothers" St. John means in the first instance "Christians," but obviously he means to include those wider senses which Christ gave to the word "neighbour." In his method of regarding all conceptions in their ideal and absolute nature, he only contemplates "love" and "hatred," and nothing intermediate. "Ubi non est amor, odium est: cor enim non est vacuum" (Bengel).

[3] "He," says Bengel, "who hates his brother is a stumbling-block to himself, and runs against himself and against everything within and without: he who loves has a smooth journey." See John xi. 9, 10. "If any man walk in the night he stumbleth, because the light is not in him." The man who walks in the light does not "set up the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his own face" (Ezek. xiv. 3).

darkness he walketh, and knoweth not where he goeth,[1] because darkness blinded his eyes" (ii. 6—11).

The verb used in the first verse of the clause expresses yet another stage of fellowship with God—not only *knowing* Him (verse 3), or *being* in Him (verse 5), but *abiding* in Him. But the stronger word is only used to express a development in the conception of obedience—the walking as Christ walked. To do this is a moral obligation following necessarily from the profession of constant union with God. The earnest address, "Beloved," prepares us for some emphatic announcement. St. John has to explain the identity of "walking as Christ walked" with a commandment which is at once old and new. The new and the old commandments are not two different commandments, but one and the same, namely the commandment which they received from the beginning of their Christian life. It is an old commandment, not only (though that is true) because it is found even in the Old Testament—for the letter is addressed to the Gentiles; but because it is as old as the whole message of the Gospel to them—"the entire word about the personal Word" which they received in the Apostolic preaching. But if Love was thus, even to these Gentile Christians, an old commandment, seeing that they had heard it all along, in what sense was it new? We might be left—as St. John's readers would have been—merely to conjecture the answer, if the Epistle had not depended upon a knowledge of the Gospel. But turning to the Gospel we find the new commandment there,

[1] "It nescius in Gehennam, ignarus et caecus praecipitatur in poenam" (Cyprian).

and also the occasion on which our Lord delivered it. In that sweet and solemn discourse which He uttered after He had washed His disciples' feet, and which was intended to explain that act of sovereign condescension, He said, "A new commandment I am giving to you, that ye love one another; as I loved you that ye also love one another. In this shall all recognise that ye are my disciples, if ye have love for one another."[1] All readers of the Epistle in reading the phrase, "a new commandment," would be at once reminded of the passage which, in all probability, they had just read in the Gospel, and would see the analogy between "walking as Christ walked," and "loving as Christ loved." Again and again, both in parables and in direct exhortation, Christ had bidden them love one another, and yet the commandment *became* a new commandment with reference to the time and the manner in which it was then delivered. For, on the one hand, He had never before bidden them to love *as He loved*, and, on the other, His act in washing their feet had set brotherly love in a light entirely new. It was an act of love, altogether exceptional and transcendent, as St. John in the Gospel had emphatically pointed out.[2] For the Lord Himself had called attention to its import in the question, "Do ye recognise the meaning of what I have done to you? I gave you an example, that as *I* did to *you*, so ye also should ever do."[3] It was an act of love in its supremest energy—an *instantia elucescens* of love which could not be surpassed. All His previous acts of love had been the loving acts of One infinitely above them—of one whom they called, and who was, their

[1] John xiii. 34, 35. [2] xiii. 1. [3] xiii. 12, 15.

Teacher and Lord. *This* was an act done as though He were their minister and slave. All other acts had been acts which, as it were, He *must* have done in accordance with His nature; which, if He had *not* done, He would not have reflected the perfectness of His own nature. But this was not an act which could have been expected; it was an act supremely astonishing; it arose, not as it were from the law of any moral obligation, but from love acting as an immeasurable impulse. This, then, is the love which furnishes the essence of the new commandment: not that love only which must ever be the first rule of Christian exhortation, but the love which ever advances to perfectionment,[1] and so works out the perfect joy into which it was one of the Apostle's objects to lead his readers.

When he proceeds to say that this new commandment is—is already—a "true thing," as being alive in *them*, as it was in Christ, we might perhaps be once more driven to ask, "What, then, is the necessity for impressing it upon them?"[2] The answer, as before, is one which applies to every one of the Epistles. It is a question which meets us at every turn in the Epistles of St. Paul, where there is often so glaring a contrast between what Christians *ought* to be, and are asserted ideally to be, and what they really are. Christians can only be addressed as Christians, as having entered into the hopes of Christians, as enjoying the privileges of Christians, as being Christians not only in name but in deed and in truth. If then they were Christians they were "in Christ"; and if they were in Christ they were walking as He walked,

[1] Heb. vi. 1.

[2] See *supra*, p. 405.

and therefore walking in love. The love which was a real thing in Him, was necessarily also a real thing in them. St. John could not address them as though they were *not* that which, as the very meaning of their whole lives, they were professing to be. And, indeed, this is the reason which he gives. The Love, he says, which is the new commandment, is a verity in Him and in you, because ye are children of the Light, and therefore the darkness is passing away. For all who were truly in Christ, that darkness must soon have passed away altogether; for not only was "the night far spent, and the day at hand,"[1] but the night was actually over, and the day had dawned. The very Light—Christ who is the Light—was shining already; shining not only in them but in the world. For the world is the universal realm of darkness, but in Him the Light is concentrated in its very essence and fulness.[2]

And then very plainly the Apostle furnishes them with a *test* of their professions. Love, he tells them, is the sign whether or not the Truth is in them, whether or not they are in the Light, whether or not they are walking as Christ walked. And the energetic severity of his moral nature appears here also in his stern antithesis of love to hatred, as though there were no possible intermediate between them. When we consider all that is involved in the word "brother," the idea of mere indifference in such a relationship becomes impossible. If there be now the essence of love, there can only be the essence of hatred. He, therefore, that professes to be in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness—belongs to the world and not to the Kingdom of Heaven—however long he may have called

[1] Rom. xiii. 12. [2] John i. 4—9.

himself a Christian. But he who loves will never cause another to stumble, can never therefore incur that grievous sentence which Christ pronounced on those who wilfully lead others into sin.[1] The man who hates his brother has the permanent sphere of his life in the darkness. The light of the body is the eye; and since the eye of such a man is evil, his whole body is full of darkness. He stumbles through life along a road of which he does not know the goal.

These two illustrative paragraphs are closed, as is the case in the first section of the Epistle (ii. 1, 2), by a hortatory conclusion,[2] which falls into the rhythm so natural to St. John—

"I write to you, my little children,[3] because[4] your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake:

"I write to you, fathers, because ye have learnt to know Him who is from the beginning:[5]

"I write to you, young men, because ye have conquered the evil one:

"I wrote[6] to you, little children,[7] because ye have learnt to know the Father:

[1] Matt. xviii. 6. [2] See analysis, *supra*, p. 396.

[3] τεκνία, addressed to all Christians, as in ver. 1; iii. 18; iv. 4; v. 21; John xiii. 33. It is only found in St. John.

[4] That ὅτι here means "because," and not "that," is proved by ver. 21.

[5] "Alii juvenes *corpore*, vos *fide*" (Bengel).

[6] ἔγραψα (ℵ, A, B, C, L, Syriac, Coptic, Æthiopic, Arabic), not γράφω, seems to be the true reading in this verse. It is very difficult to say why the tense is altered; possibly only for emphasis, like the formula "we decree and have decreed." The attempt to refer it only to the part of the Epistle already written, while γράφω points to what follows, is untenable and against usage. Both words refer to the whole Epistle. It is, however, curious that up to this point γράφω has occurred seven times, whereas ἔγραψα is used six times in the rest of the letter.

[7] παιδία seems to differ in no sense from τεκνία. See ver. 18; John xxi. 5. Perhaps the change is merely for the sake of literary form and variety. Τεκνία may be a little more personal and affectionate, and so be represented, as Bishop Wordsworth says, by "*my* little children."

"I wrote to you, fathers, because ye have learnt to know Him who is from the beginning:

"I wrote to you, young men, because ye are strong,[1] and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have conquered the wicked one"[2] (ii. 12—14).

In these words we have a six-fold appeal, of which the first three clauses are introduced by the present, "I write," and the last three by the aorist, "I wrote." This aorist might be rendered in English by the perfect, "*I have written*," since it was the tense used by epistolary idiom to represent a letter regarded as a whole. The first question to be settled is whether the Apostle has in view three different ages of life. If so, it is certainly strange that he should place "fathers" between "little children" and "young men." From his use of "little children" in other parts of the Epistle, to express *the whole body of Christians*, there can be little doubt that this is his meaning here. If so, in the first of each three clauses he is exhorting Christians as a body, and in the latter two he is specially speaking to the two classes into which Christians of that day might most generally be divided, namely, "fathers" and "young men." Indeed, to address "little children" *as such* would have been alien to the habits of that age, nor would little children have understood the language here addressed to them. He says to the Christians generally that their sins have been forgiven them, because, as we have had repeated occasion to see, every address to Christians "must *presuppose* Christianity in the hearers, and yet *teach* it." Hence he

[1] "Fitque valens juvenis neque enim robustior aetas Ulla" (Ov. *Met.* xv. 208). ἰσχυροί (Luke xi. 21; Heb. xi. 34).

[2] In all these appeals the strongest warning is involved in the loftiness of the assumed ideal. [3] ii. 1, 28.

addresses the fathers of the Churches, whether in a literal or an ideal sense, as having attained to the true knowledge of the Eternal Father; and the young men as having won a secure and tranquil mastery over temptation. After due time the young man's conquest will lead to the father's knowledge. The general identity in meaning of the second three with the first three clauses makes it somewhat difficult to account for the change of tense. Both phrases, "I write" and "I wrote," refer to this letter; the first as expressing the writer's present purpose, the other mentally glancing at it as a completed whole. The two together give a greater emphasis to his exhortations,[1] and are, perhaps, meant by way of introduction to the following section of the Epistle :—

"Love not the world,[2] nor yet the things in the world.[3] If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;[4] because everything that is in the world, the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes,[5] and the braggart vaunt of life,[6] is not from the Father,

[1] "A *scribo* transit ad *scripsi*: non temere; scilicet verbo scribendi ex praesenti in praeteritum transposito immisit commonitionem formossimam" (Bengel).

[2] "God loved the world" (John iii. 16) with Divine compassion, as its Creator; we are not to love it with base desire. We are not to set our affections either on its material seductions, or on those human corruptions which mark its ruined condition.

[3] All kinds of sinful living, thinking, and demeanour (Ebrard). "Vulgata consuetudo hominum, res corporeas unice appetentium" (Semler).

[4] "Contraria non sunt simul" (Bengel).

[5] "Desire" (ἐπιθυμία) is coupled (always subjectively, *i.e.*, the desire *of*, not *for*) with "the heart" (Rom. i. 24), "the body" (Rom. vi. 12), and "mankind" (1 Pet. iv. 2, &c.). Desires are called "worldly" (Tit. ii. 12) and "fleshly" (1 Pet. ii. 11). By the "desire of the flesh" is meant every form of wrong or excessive lust. By the "desire of the eyes" is meant the sphere of selfishness, envy, covetousness, hatred, and revenge (Ebrard). Thus in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, one of the seven "spirits of deceit," is the "spirit of seeing, with which desire is produced."

[6] Similarly, while speaking of luxurious extravagance, Polybius (vi. 5,

but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and the desire of it. But he who doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Little children, it is the last hour,[1] and as ye heard that Antichrist[2] is coming, even now antichrists in numbers have come into being, whence we recognise that it is the last hour.[3] From us they went forth, but they were not of us, for had they been of us they would have abode with us; but (they went out) in order that they may be manifested that all are not of us"[4] (ii. 15, 19).

With this clause begins the third section of St. John's illustrations as to the nature and meaning of "walking in the light." As the very name of the Light reminds us of the darkness, which is its opposite; and as God's kingdom is the sphere of Light, so the world is the realm of darkness. He, then, who would walk in the Light must enter into the meaning of this severance. He must not love the world, nor the things which enter into the ideas of the world. Those things are defined under their ethical aspect. They are the objects of sensual desire in all its forms. They are the things which tend to the gratification of the flesh—that is, of our whole lower and animal nature—everything

7) says—ἡ περὶ τοὺς βίους ἀλαζονεία καὶ πολυτέλεια. Chrysostom calls it "the inflation (τῦφος) and outward splendour (φαντασία) of worldly life." "Libido sentiendi, sciendi, dominandi" (Pascal).

[1] All Christians felt that the fall of Jerusalem was the close of an aeon. It was a coming of Christ. They all felt that after that He might finally come to judgment at any time. "Ultimum tempus, in quo sic complentur omnia ut nihil supersit praeter ultimam Christi revelationem" (Calvin; 1 Cor. xv. 22; 2 Cor. v. 1, *sq.*; 1 Thess. iv. 15, *sq.*).

[2] "Antichrist" is a word peculiar to St. John in the N. T. (ii. 18, 22; iv. 3; 2 John 7). These are the only passages in which the word occurs. Strange to say, it is not once used in the Apocalypse.

[3] 2 Tim. iii. 1, *sq.*

[4] The οὐ πάντες *might* mean "none," as οὐ πᾶσα σὰρξ means "no flesh" in Rom. iii. 20, but it is simpler to explain the passage as a mixture of two constructions, "that *they* may be manifested as not belonging to us," and "that it may be manifested that all (*i.e.*, all who *nominally* belong to us) are not of us."

which tends to foster and stimulate the sins of gluttony, drunkenness, and impurity in all their many forms and gradations. They are the things which gratify the desire of the eyes—all that tends to the sins of intellectual selfishness and slothful æstheticism.[1] They are the braggart vaunt of outward life—all that tends to the sins of vulgar ostentation, egotistic pride, intellectual contempt, which spring from regarding life, not in its divine and spiritual (ζωὴ), but in its earthly and external aspect (βίος).[2] In St. John's language, therefore, the world (*kosmos*) does not mean the physical universe, which does indeed deserve the name of "order," by which it is described,[3] but the world regarded in its ethical sense, that is, a world disordered by the unrestrained prevalence of sinful forces, the world fettered in the bondage of corruption.[4] He bids us not to love this world—to have no esteem and affection for it—for two reasons. First, because such love cannot proceed from God, but from that evil principle which is the source of all vain and vile desires; and next, because the world is but a fleeting show, and the desires which it inflames can have but an instant's gratification. On the other hand, he who makes the will of God the law of all his actions, abides for ever. And it is the property of love to bind us closely to that which we love; if we love the earth we are earthly; the love of God makes us divine.[5]

[1] Matt. vi. 22.

[2] βίος, mere "living"—the psychic, animal, sensuous life, as in iii. 17. ἐν σαρκὶ βιῶσαι, 1 Pet. iv. 2.

[3] "Quem κόσμον Graeci nomine ornamenti appellaverunt" (Plin. *H. N.* ii. 3).

[4] Rom. viii. 19, 20.

[5] "Amor habet vim uniendi; si terram amas terrenus es, si Deum divinus" (Gerson).

Then from the general warning against the world he descends to its special manifestation in the form of anti-Christian error, which he introduces with the address of fatherly tenderness, "Little children, it is the last hour." The world and its desire is passing away now, it has not long to last. The final dispensation has begun. There will not be, there cannot be, any new dispensation. How long *this* æon is to last neither St. John knew nor any man, not even the angels in heaven. With reference to all previous æons *this* is the final æon. At its close there will be the new heaven and the new earth. And potentially this æon is already complete. With the manifestation of the Word in flesh its whole development was condensed into its first moment. It may linger on for a thousand years, for a thousand years is with the Lord as one day; but "it has already advanced to the top of its development, and therefore hastens to its end." And one sign of that ever-approaching end—ever approaching however long delayed—is the existence already of many Antichrists. Whether the many were yet to be concentrated into one monstrous development of intense personal wickedness, St. John does not say. The word Antichrist, which St. John alone uses, may mean either "*rivals* of Christ"—*i.e.*, pseudo-Christs (Matt. xxiv. 5, 11), or "*enemies* of Christ;"[1]—either those who try to pass themselves off as Christs, or those who set themselves in open array against him. An Antichrist may take the semblance of a Nero or of a Simon Magus, of a Priest or

[1] The preposition ἀντί is used in both senses in compounds—either (1) "instead of" or (2) "opposed to." Thus we have (1) ἀντιβασιλέυς, "a viceroy;" ἀντίθεος, "a demi-god;" ἀνθύπατος, "a proconsul," &c.; and (2) ἀντιφιλόσοφος, "an enemy to philosophers;" ἀντιμαχητής, "an opponent;"

of a Voltaire. St. John enters into no details because his readers had already heard that Antichrist cometh. This must refer to his own oral teachings, or those of other Apostles, for he tells us afterwards that by "Antichrists" he means those who deny the Incarnation (iv. 3), or who deny the Father and the Son (ii. 22). This form of Antichrist is not described either by Daniel, or by St. Paul in his Man of Sin. If, in 2 Thess. 3, 4, the expression of St. Paul may admit of some sort of analogous interpretation, it certainly could not have been assumed by St. John that the brief letter to a Macedonian Church would already have pervaded the whole of Asia.[1]

Nevertheless, the prevalence of these Antichrists, of whom St. John had orally spoken, was the direct fulfilment of the weeping prophesy of St. Paul, in his farewell to the Ephesian Elders, "that after his departure grievous wolves would enter among them, not sparing the flock, and that *from among their own selves* men would arise, speaking perverted things to drag away disciples after them." The very danger to the Church lay in the fact that this anti-Christian teaching arose out of her own bosom. The Antichrists did not openly apostatise from the Christian body; they corrupted it from within. They still *called* themselves Christians; had they really been so, they would have continued to be so. But their present apostasy was a manifestation of

ἀντικάτων, a book "against Cato." Had St. John meant "a *rival* of Christ," he would have used *pseudochristos*, as he uses *pseudo-prophetes*. The Fathers, both Greek and Latin, understood the word *normally* to mean "contrarius Christo" (Aug.), "Christi rebelles" (Tert.). See Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, p. 145. See Hurd's *Sermons on Prophecies respecting Antichrist*, and *Prejudices against the Doctrine*.

[1] Acts xxi. 29, 30.

the fact that they never had been true Christians, and that not all who called themselves Christians are such in reality.

But if there be these dangers from within — if the Christianity of the *lips* is consistent with anti-Christianity of life—if walking in the light is nevertheless wholly incompatible with any fellowship with the world, as manifested in this or any other form of anti-Christianity — how is the Christian to be secured? That is the question which, in the next section, St. John proceeds to answer.

"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.[1] He that confesseth the Son hath also the Father. I have not written unto ye because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he that denieth Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist; even he that denieth the Father and the Son; whosoever denieth the Son the same hath not the Father; he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also. *Ye*—what ye heard from the beginning, let it abide in you. If that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which he promises to us—Eternal Life.

"These things wrote I to you concerning those who mislead you. And ye—the unction[2] which ye received from Him, abideth in you, and ye have not need that any man teach you, but as the unction itself teacheth you concerning all things,[3] and is a true thing and not a lie; and even as it taught you, abide in it" (ii. 20—27).

Here then is the Christian's security—an unction from the Holy Spirit, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit

[1] "Si Christum bene scis, satis est si caetera nescis;
Si Christum nescis, nihil est, si caetera discis."
Motto of Johann Bugenhagen.

[2] The word *chrisma*, not used in the Gospel, may be suggested by the word anti*christos*. All Christians are *christoi*, "anointed of God." Comp. Acts x. 38, "God *anointed* Him with the Holy Spirit."

[3] That is all things essential; all that we need.

by which we are anointed to be Kings, and Priests, and Prophets,[1] even as Prophets,[2] Priests, and Kings were anointed of old. We are anointed by the same chrism as was Christ himself, and therefore can discern between Christ and Antichrist. This was the Lord's promise that His Holy Spirit should lead us into all truth, and therefore separate us, by His consecration, from the region of darkness, from the world, its errors and its lusts. And this is why St. John need not dwell on a multitude of particulars, or track the various ramifications of deceit. For he is not writing to Jews or to Gentiles, but to Christian men, whom he needs only to remind that they belong to the sphere, not of lying semblances but of the Eternal and the Real. They are already "in the light;" he does but need to remind them to abide therein. Now, for a Christian to deny that Jesus is the Christ, stamps him as radically untrue. He must have ceased to be "in Christ" by that denial; he must have left the kingdom of heaven for the world, the light for the darkness, the Real for the illusory. And to deny the Son is to deny the Father, since only by the Son has the Father been made known. These stern, disconnected sentences, falling like hammer strokes on the heart of the listener, mark that holy and uncompromising severity of St. John's ideal, which resulted from his living in the atmosphere of contemplation, and regarding all things in their inmost nature and essence. Yet we should judge, from the affectionate title of "little children" by which they are introduced, and we know from the precious traditions of the

[1] Is. lxi. 1. Kings and priests, Rev. i. 6; "a royal priesthood, a holy nation," 1 Pet. ii. 9; prophets, Joel ii. 28; Acts ii. 17, 18.

[2] 1 Kings xix. 16 only.

Apostle's later days, that this stern theological inflexibility cannot be perverted, as it so often has been, into an excuse for theological hatred and party spirit, since it was combined with the tenderest charity towards erring souls.

But to save them from all this terrible defection, they had but to abide in the truth which they heard from the first, and to suffer it to abide in them. The exhortation resembles that of our Lord in the Gospel, "Abide in Me and I in you.[1] If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask for yourselves whatever ye will and it shall be granted to you." Their active endeavours after constancy would be followed by a passive growth in grace. The abiding is secured by the constancy. The constancy is secured by the abiding. "It is a permanent and continuous reciprocation; the abiding of Christ in men furthers their abiding in Him; this again facilitates the former; and so it goes on."

This abiding is what He promised to us, and it is Eternal Life. For Eternal Life is fellowship with the Father and the Son. "This is Life Eternal, that they should learn to know Thee the Only the Very God, and Him whom Thou sendest, Jesus Christ."[2]

Then, in the last two verses (26, 27), comes the recapitulation and closing exhortation, before he passes to a new topic. "You have heard your danger. You are aware of that Unction which will secure you against it. I have told you what is the meaning of the Eternal Life, and of the fellowship on which I touched at the beginning of my letter. Abide in the Unction. It is a

[1] John xv. 4, 5, 7.
[2] John xvii. 2, 3.

thing absolutely real, incommunicably dissevered from all that is false. Thus it is a source of all true teaching to you. That is the one command which is needful for you."

SECTION II.

THE CONFIDENCE OF SONSHIP.

Having thus shown at length that fellowship with God involves a walk in the Light, and a confession of sin, and that our fellowship with the brethren consists in general obedience to the commands of God, and special imitation of Christ in His love for all; and having shown that this common fellowship with God and with our brethren necessitates an absolute severance from the world in general, and from all antichristian teaching in particular, he enters on another topic—namely, on *the confidence inspired by Sonship as a sign of our possession of Eternal Life.*

"And now little children abide in Him, that if He be manifested we may have confidence, and may not be shamed away from Him in His appearing.[1] If ye know that He is righteous, ye recognise that every one also who doeth righteousness has been born of Him.

"See what love the Father hath given to us[2] that we should be called children of God.[3] [And such we are.[4]] For this cause the world recogniseth not us, because it did not recognise Him. Beloved,

[1] "Ne pudefiamus ab ejus praesentiâ" (Calvin). Matt. xxv. 41. πορεύεσθε απ' ἐμοῦ.

[2] ἡμῖν, "indignis, inimicis, peccatoribus" (Corn. à Lapide).

[3] The missionary Ziegebalg tells an interesting story that in translating this passage with the aid of a Hindoo youth, the youth rendered it, "*that we should be allowed to kiss His feet.*" When asked why he thus diverged from the text, he replied, "*A Child!* that is too much—too high!" (Braune, *ad loc.*).

[4] These words are found in ℵ, A, B, C, Theophylact (γενέσθαι τε καὶ λογισθῆναι), Augustine, &c. They are omitted in K, L, and by Œcumenius. They may be genuine, but read like an awkward gloss. The Vulg. renders it wrongly "*et simus.*"

now we are children of God, and not yet is it manifested what we shall be. We know that if He be manifested we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him even as He is. And every one who hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure"[1] (ii. 28—iii. 3).

The "and now," and the address, "little children," of ii. 28, together with the introduction of the four new thoughts—of Christ's "manifestation," of our having "confidence," of "doing righteousness," and of having been "born of God"—all indicate the beginning of a new section. And every one of these new thoughts is referred to and developed in the next great division of the Epistle.[2]

i. As regards the "*manifestation*" of Christ, that term, as expressive of His return to judgment, is peculiar to St. John, and marks his invariable point of view that all things in the Divine economy advance, not by sudden catastrophes, but by germinant developments in accordance with eternal laws. Christ is present now; His return will be but a manifestation of His Presence; and it is, perhaps, the consciousness that Christ is always present which has prevented St. John from elsewhere using the word *Parousia* for His second return, though that term is so common in the other sacred writers. Only by abiding in God can we meet that manifested

[1] Comp. 2 Cor. vii. 1. The Apostles do not deem it necessary at every turn to introduce all the qualifications which would express the whole truth as to the Divine and human elements in the work of salvation; but of course the "purifieth himself" must be understood side by side with John xv. 5, "without Me ye can do nothing." "Castificas te, non de te, sed de illo qui venit ut inhabitet te" (Aug.). There seems to be no fundamental distinction between the uses of ἁγνίζω and καθαρίζω. The adjectives ἁγνὸς, καθαρὸς are used indifferently for טָהוֹר in the LXX. both of material (Num. viii. 21, &c.) and spiritual things (Ps. xi. 7, &c.).

[2] "Manifestation of Christ" (iii. 3—8); "Confidence" (iii. 21; iv. 17; v. 14); "Doing righteousness" (iii. 1—10); being "born of God" (iii. 24, *seq.*).

Presence without shame, and answer with confidence at His judgment seat. Now, as St. John has already said that "every one who abideth in Him sinneth not," so now he expresses the same thought in a more developed form, by saying that the doing righteousness—as He is righteous—is the test of having been born of Him. He who does not sin has fellowship with God. He whose innocence is manifested in righteousness may know with confidence that he has been born of God. Here the Evangelist's point of view nearly resembles that of St. Paul, when he says that "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal,—'The Lord knoweth them that are His,' and 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'"[1]

The righteous man, then, is the son of God; and what love has the Father given us with this very object—that we may be called His children! St. John does not call us "sons" of God, as St. Paul does,[2] but "children," because he regards the sonship less as adoptive and more as natural. If the world does not recognise the sonship we are not to be surprised, since neither did it recognise the Sonship of Him from whom our sonship is derived. But there is another reason why St. John calls us "children" rather than "sons." It is because the word "childhood" involves in it the necessary idea of future growth, and this is true of our relation to God. Children we are, and something more than this we shall

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 19.

[2] "According to St. Paul we receive for Christ's *sake* the *rights* of children. According to St. John we receive through Christ the children's nature. According to St. Paul the old nature of man is transformed into a new. According to St. John an altogether new principle of nature takes the place of the former. It is most evident that the two views are substantially one, and true, but they depend on the respective general systems of the two Apostles" (Haupt, p. 156).

be hereafter, because we shall see God, and, therefore, become more and more like Him, though that new, and as yet unknown, relationship to Him will be but the full evolution of the old. And it is the constant aim of every one who really holds this hope to begin that ever-increasing resemblance, by even now purifying himself even as Christ is pure.

Our sonship of God is, therefore, *tested* at the Last Day by our lives; and to us it can only become a matter of present assurance by doing righteousness. He proceeds to illustrate this truth in four sentences, of which each consists of two clauses. First, he shows that sin is opposed to God and opposed to Christ (vs. 4, 5); then that to abide in Him is to be sinless, and that to be sinful is never to have seen Him (v. 6); nay more, he shows that to do righteousness is to be of God, and to do sin is to be of the devil (vs. 7, 8); then, in the last two verses of the clause (9, 10), he recapitulates the proof, and states the final result.

The section then is as follows:—

"Every one that committeth sin committeth also lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And ye know that He was manifested that He may take away sins,[1] and sin is not in Him" (iii. 4, 5).

"Every one who abideth in Him sinneth not. Every one who sinneth hath not seen Him nor even known Him"[2] (ver. 6).

"Little children, let no one mislead you. He that doeth right-

[1] "Tollit peccata et dimittendo quae facta sunt, et adjuvando ne fiant, et perducendo ad vitam ubi fieri omnino non possunt" (Bede).

[2] "In ipso peccati momento talis fit, ac si Eum nullo viderit modo" (Bengel). This verse, as Theophylact tells us, was regarded by Antinomian Gnostics as proving the indefectibility of grace, and so was turned into an excuse for lasciviousness. But that certain *practical* modifications must be admitted is clear, from previous passages in the Epistle itself. The older expositors generally adopted the method of toning down the Apostle's language. Modern expositors accept the language as meaning

eousness is righteous, as He is righteous. He that doeth sin is of the devil,[1] because the devil sinneth from the beginning.[2] For this pur-

what it says, but regard it as applying only to the ideal. The two methods come to much the same thing in the end. Thus, in verse 9, some explain "he cannot sin," by—

He cannot commit mortal sin (Romanists).
He cannot sin deliberately and intentionally (Ebrard).
He cannot sin in the way of hating his brother (Augustine, Bede).
It is alien from his nature to sin (Grotius).
His nature and habit resist sin (Paulus).
He does not *wish* to sin, or *ought* not to sin (various Commentators).
He cannot be a sinner (ἁμαρτάνειν) (Wordsworth, and so Didymus).
He *does* not sin, he only *suffers* sin (Besser; comp. Rom. vii. 17).
So far as he remains true to himself, he does not sin (Augustine).
So long as he is a child of God he cannot sin (others).

The only possible escape from some such modification, is by asserting the possibility of sinlessness in this life (which contradicts i. 8), or else by asserting that *none* of us have seen God, and none of us are children of God (which contradicts the whole Epistle). Hopkins says, "The interpretation which I judge to be most natural and unforced is this: He that is born of God doth not commit sin—that is, he doth not sin in that malignant manner in which the children of the devil do; he doth not make a trade of sin, nor live in the constant and allowed practice of it. . . . There is a great difference between regenerate and unregenerate persons in the very sins that they commit. '*Their spot* is not the spot of his children' (Deut. xxxii. 5). And as they differ in the committing of sin, so much more in the opposing of it." And if the Stoic was allowed to set before himself *his ideal*, why may not the Christian do the same? Seneca said that the wise man was not only able to do right, but even could not do otherwise. "*Vir bonus non potest non facere quod facit; in omni actu par sibi, jam non consilio bonus, sed more eo perductus; ut non tantum recte facere possit, sed nisi recte facere non possit.*" And Velleius Paterculus said of the younger Cato, "Homo virtuti simillimus, et per omnia ingenio Diis quam hominibus propior, qui nunquam recte fecit ut facere videretur, *sed quia aliter facere non poterat*" (*Hist.* ii. 34); and he spoke of him as "exempt from all human vices." And Tacitus said that when Nero wished to kill Paetus Thrasea, it was as if he wished "*to kill virtue herself.*" The Christian ideal is infinitely higher than the Stoic, and that is why the Christian knows that not even a saint can be absolutely sinless; yet he *hates* sin, and more and more wins the victory over it.

[1] He does not say, "*born* of the devil." "Neminem fecit diabolus, neminem genuit neminem creavit" (Aug.). His work is "corruptio non generatio" (Bengel).

[2] Not "ex quo diabolus est diabolus" (Bengel), but since sin began: "ab initio οὗ peccare."

pose was the Son of God manifested that He may destroy the works of the devil" (ver. 7, 8).

"Every one that hath been born of God doth not commit sin, because His seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because He has been born of God" (ver. 9).

"In this are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil" (ver. 10*a*).

To careless and superficial readers many of these clauses might look like mere mysticism clothed in antithetic tautologies. To one who has tried to study the mind and manner of St. John, they are full of the deepest meaning. Take the very first clause. How deep and awful a conception of sin ought we to derive from the fact that all sin, however slight it may seem to us, is not a matter of indifference, but a transgression of the divine law! How does such a conception tend to silence our petty excuses, or our weak talk about pardonable human imperfections! How different will be our tone—how little shall we be inclined "to say before the angel 'It was an *error*'"—when once we have realised this "universal and exceptionless fact!" And still more when we remember that not only is every sin, in God's sight, the violation of the eternal law, but also a violation of the whole purpose of Christ's manifestation which was expressly meant to take all sins away. And when St. John proceeds to say that he who sinneth hath never seen or known God, however much we may be inclined to introduce limitations into this language, both by the daily facts of Christian experience, and the recognition in this very Epistle that even the most advanced believer does not here attain to absolute sinlessness (i. 8—10), yet the awfulness of the stern, unbending language tends to convince us, more than anything

else could, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, seeing that every act of it is a proof, as far as it goes, of alienation from God; of affiliation, in some sense, to him from whom all sin began. It is a nullifying of all that Christ died to achieve. The summing up, then, of what he has said, is that in every one who has been born of God there is a principle of divine life which renders sin impossible. Sin, on the other hand, shows, by ethical likeness, its Satanic parentage. St. John divides all men simply into children of God and children of the devil, and recognises no intermediate classes. We do not see it to be so in the ordinary mixture and confusion of human life, but in the abstract and in the essence of things, so it is. To God, though not to men, it is possible to write the epitaph of each life in the brief words, "He did that which was good," or "he did that which was evil" in the sight of the Lord.

On the dread severity of this language, on the only possible explanation and alleviation of it, I have already dwelt.[1] The ideal truth must ever, so to speak, float above its actual realisation. But the warning force of St. John's high words lies in *this*:—We are children of God by birth and by gift, but unless we also approve ourselves as His children by act and life, we sink out of that sonship into Satanic depths. Every sin we commit is a proof that we are not yet children of light, children of God; but that darkness still has power over us. For each such defection we must find forgiveness, and against each such defection we must strive more and more. A child of God, as Luther says, may receive daily wounds in the conflict, but he

[1] See *supra*, pp. 387—390.

never throws away his arms. If once we have fully and freely dedicated ourselves to God, sin may sometimes invade us, but it can never have dominion over us. Of the two seals on the one foundation—"God's knowledge of us as His own," and "Departure from iniquity"—where the one is found, the other will be never wanting.

The demonstration of sonship, then, in relation to God, is "to do righteousness"; and in relation to man this righteousness is manifested by loving our brethren, which he illustrates first negatively (10*b*—15) and then positively (16—18).

"Every one who doeth not righteousness is not from God, nor he who loveth not his brother. Because this is the message (ἀγγελία, A, B, &c.,) which ye heard from the beginning, in order that (ἵνα) we should love one another: not as Cain was from the wicked one,[1] and brutally slew his brother. And why did he brutally slay him? Because his deeds were evil, but those of his brother righteous. Wonder not, brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.[2] He who loveth not abideth in death. Every one who hateth his brother is a murderer,[3] and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (iii. 10*b*—15).

Our duty to man follows as an immediate corollary from our duty to God, just as the second table of the Decalogue follows naturally as an inference from the first. No doubt in thus exhorting to brotherly love, St. John is thinking in the first place of the Churches which he is addressing, and therefore by

[1] *I.e.*, "Let us not be of the wicked one as Cain was, who," &c. The construction is condensed, as in 1 Cor. x. 8. Some of the Rabbis said that "Cain was a son of Eve and the Serpent" (Zohar).

[2] "Bona opera non praecedunt justificandum sed sequuntur justificatum" (Aug.).

[3] Comp. Seneca's "Latro es antequam inquines manum."

"brother" he primarily means Christian. But to *confine* his meaning to Christian brethren would be to wrong the majesty of his teaching. It would also dwarf all that our Lord taught on the same subject—as, for instance, in the parable of the Good Samaritan; and the force of Christ's own example who loved us and died for us while we were yet sinners. And to miss the truth that love is the very central command of Christianity—though that truth has been missed for centuries—though Church parties in their narrow and envenomed controversies daily prove how utterly they have missed it—though all kinds of glozing self-deceptions are practised to persuade the conscience that violations of it are *not* violations of it, but are "uncompromising faithfulness" and "burning zeal"—yet to miss that truth is inexcusable, for it was delivered from the first, and is repeated continually. It was, as the Apostle tells us, at once the matter ("this is the message") and the purpose ("in order that ye may love one another") of the Christian revelation.

In his usual manner of illustrating by opposites, St. John impresses the duty by showing the frightfulness of hatred, of which he selects Cain as an example, because it is the earliest and one of the worst. The word which he uses for the murder—(ἔσφαξεν, "he butchered")—perhaps refers to some Jewish legend as to the manner in which the murder had been accomplished. The instance was peculiarly apposite, because the murder was but the ripened fruit of a secret envy caused by God's approval of good works in another. It was, therefore, well adapted to show the nature of the *world's* hatred to the Church, and to illustrate the fact that hatred belongs to the world—

that is, to the realm of Satan and of darkness—and should therefore be utterly excluded from the Kingdom of Light and of Christ. Let not the Church be as Cain-like as the world. For hatred means death, and we have passed from death into life, as our love to the brethren shows.[1] On the other hand, if—though we call ourselves Christians—we still hate, we are still in death. For all hatred is potential murder; it is murder in the undeveloped germ; and it is impossible to conceive a murderer as having in him that divine, that spiritual life which alone corresponds to St. John's use of the word "eternal."

Passing from the negative to the positive illustration, he continues:—

"Hereby we have learnt to know what love is—because He, on our behalf, pledged His life; and we ought to pledge our lives for the brethren. But whoever hath this world's sustenance, and contemplates (*θεωρῇ*) his brother suffering want, and locks up from him his pity,[2] how doth the love of God abide in him? Let us not love with word nor yet with tongue,[3] but in deed and in truth"[4] (iii. 16—18).

Cain has furnished the most awful warning against hatred. There can be but one example, which is the most emphatic exhortation to love—namely, He who loved even His enemies, and proved His love for them by His death. Cain slew his brother because he hated him for his goodness; Christ died for sinners because

[1] Here again we have the double fact of a warning accompanied by the assertion that (*ideally*) it is quite needless.

[2] *σπλάγχνα rachamîm*, Prov. xii. 10 (tender mercies).

[3] "Sermone otioso, lingua simulante" (Bengel).

[4] *Μή μοι ἀνὴρ γλώσσῃ εἴη φίλος ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔργῳ Χερσίν τε σπεύδοι χρήμασί τ' ἀμφότερα* (Theognis); "Ye knot of *mouth*-friends" (Shaksp., *Timon of Athens*).

He loved them in their iniquity. The phrase rendered in the English version, "He *laid down* His life," is found in St. John only, but it is one of which he is specially fond.[1] He borrows it from the discourses of our Lord, and it is therefore coloured in all probability by Hebrew analogies. If the reference be to Isaiah liii. 10, it involves the conception of laying down life as a pledge, a stake, a compensation. We ought to do the same according to the measure of need. But how can any man do this who grudges, or coldly ignores, the simplest, most initial, most instinctive acts of kindness to his suffering brethren?—who, like the fastidious Priest and the icy-hearted Levite of the parable, can coldly stare at his brother's need, and bolt against him the treasure-house of natural pity? How can the man who thus shows that he has *no* love in him, love God who is *all* love? Thus we see that with St. John, as with St. Paul, the loftiest principles lead to the humblest duties, and even as it takes the whole law of gravitation to mould a tear no less than to shape a planet, so the element or obligation of kindness to the suffering is made to rest on the infinite basis that God is Love. The man who is capable of such unnatural hardness as St. John describes, is quite capable of the hypocrisy of profession. Like the vain talker in St. James (ii. 16), he will doubtless tell the sufferer how much he pities him; he will say to him, with a fervour of compassion, "Be warmed," "Be clothed," but he has ten thousand cogent and ready excuses to show why he cannot personally render him any assistance. For such lip-charity, such mere pleasantly-emotional pity, such eloquent babble of hard-heartedness, wear-

[1] John x. 11, 15, 17, 18; xiii. 37, 38; xv. 13.

ing the cloak of compassion, he warns them to substitute the activity and reality of love.

The recapitulation which follows is extremely difficult, and all the more so because the punctuation is uncertain, the construction unusual, the readings unsettled. I give the rendering which, on the whole, approves itself to my mind, but I am far from certain that it is correct. Other versions and other interpretations are almost equally tenable, and I incline to the view that there is either some corruption in the text, or that some confusion may have arisen in the dictation of the Epistle. The difficulty in interpreting the words of St. John is almost always the difficulty of fathoming the true depth of his phrases — the difficulty of understanding the full spiritual meaning of his words. His style is, for the most part, incomparable in its lucidity, and there must be *some* disturbing element which renders it impossible in the next two verses to be at all sure that we have ascertained what he meant, or even what he said.

"And hereby shall we recognise that we are of the truth, and we shall in His sight assure our hearts:[1] because if our heart condemn us, [because] God is greater than our heart, and recogniseth all things"[2] (iii. 19, 20).

[1] πείσομεν seems to mean we shall still the questionings of our hearts; persuade them that the view which they take of our frailties is too despairing. Haupt's rendering, "we shall *soothe*," only lies in the context, not in the word (comp. Acts xii. 20, πείσαντες Βλάστον; E. V., "*having made* Blastus *their friend*;" Gal. i. 10).

[2] I cannot at all accept the version of Haupt, or his explanation of this extremely difficult passage. He takes it to mean, "In this love rests our consciousness that we are of the truth, and by it may we *soothe* our hearts, *in all cases in which* (ὅτι ἐάν) our heart condemns us, for God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things." The difficulty lies partly in the repeated ὅτι. If the first ὅτι means "because," the second must also mean "because," and this gives a very awkward clause, and

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not we have confidence towards God; and whatsoever we ask we receive from Him, because we are keeping His commandments, and are doing the things which are acceptable before Him. And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another even as He gave us commandment. And he who keepeth His commandments abideth in Him, and He in him" (iii. 21—24*a*).

Assuming that the *reading* which I have followed in the first two verses of this passage is correct, and the *grammatical construction* admissible, the meaning will be simple. It is that Brotherly Love is a proof that we belong to the kingdom of Eternal Reality, and that by this assurance we shall ever be able to still the misgivings of our hearts. For even if the individual heart of each one of us knoweth its own bitterness and condemns itself, still, since we are sincere, and have given proof of our sincerity by love to the brethren, we may fall back on the love and mercy of One who is greater, and therefore more tender, than our self-condemning hearts. He will "count the long Yes of life" against its one No, or its guilty moment. Because He recogniseth all things—because,

makes no good sense. I therefore take the view of the old scholiast, who says "the second ὅτι is superfluous" (τὸ δεύτερον ὅτι παρέλκει). We find a similar instance of ὅτι repeated in Eph. ii. 11, 12, and in classic writers (Xen. *Anab.* v. 16, § 19, "They say *that* if not . . . *that* he will run a risk"). If it be thought an insuperable objection that in these instances ὅτι always means "that" and not "because," I can only suppose that the second ὅτι is really a confusion due to dictation. I take the consolatory, not the dark view of the passage. I think that St. John meant us to regard it as a subject of *hope*, not of *despair*, that God is greater than our hearts. This certainly is most in accordance with John xxi. 17—"Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee." It would be useless to repeat the tediously voluminous varieties of exposition which have been applied to the passage. [The Revised Version renders it, "and shall assure our heart before Him, whereinsoever our heart condemn us."]

knowing all things, He recognises that we do love Him[1]—because, where sin abounded there grace much more abounded[2]—because, as Luther said, the conscience is but a waterdrop, whereas God is a deep sea of compassion—therefore He will look upon us

> "With larger other eyes than ours,
> To make allowance for us all."

But if our heart condemn us not of wilful failure in general obedience or in brotherly love—if we can, by God's grace, say with St. Paul, "I am not conscious of any wrong-doing"—then, when faith has triumphed over a self-condemning despair—we have that confidence towards God of which St. John spoke at the beginning of this section (ii. 28), and are also sure that God will grant our prayers, both personal—that we may ever more and more do the thing that is right—and intercessory—that His love may be poured forth on our brethren also. And thus shall we fulfil the commandments to believe and to love. These two commandments form the summary of *all* God's commandments; for the one is the inward spirit of obedience, the other its outward form. He who thus keeps God's commandments, abides in God and God in him.

The thoughts of the writer in these verses are evidently filled with the last discourses of the Lord, which he has just recorded in the Gospel, and which he may assume to be fresh in the minds of his readers. In these verses he dwells on the same topics—faith, love, prayer, union with God, the Holy Spirit. In this clause he concludes the section, which has been

[1] John xxi. 17, *κύριε σὺ πάντα οἶδας, σὺ γινώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε.*
[2] Rom. v. 20.

devoted to the proof that Doing Righteousness and Love of the brethren are the practical signs that we are sons of God. In the second clause of verse 24—which would better have been placed at the head of the next chapter—he passes to two new thoughts, which form the basis of his proof that the source of our sonship is the reception of the Holy Spirit of God, and therefore that our confidence towards God (*παῤῥησία*, ii. 28; iii. 21; iv. 17, 18) may be absolute, even to the end.

SECTION III.

THE SOURCE OF SONSHIP.

"And hereby we recognise that He abideth in us, from the Spirit which He gave us. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone forth into the world. Hereby ye recognise the Spirit of God; every spirit which confesseth Jesus as Christ come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit which severeth Jesus is not from God, and this is the spirit of Antichrist of which ye have heard that it cometh, and now is it in the world already. Ye are from God, little children; and ye have overcome them because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; for this cause they speak from the world, and the world heareth them. We are from God; he who learns to know God heareth us; he who is not from God heareth not us.[1] From this we recognise the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (iii. 24*b*—iv. 6).

The change of phrase from "abide in Him" (ii. 28) to "He abideth in us," and the introduction of the new thought involved in the mention of the Spirit, mark the beginning of a new clause. The subject of this clause is at once stated in the words "we recognise that He abideth in us." We are passing from the *tests* of

[1] "For this have I been born, and for this have I come into the world, that I should testify to the Truth. Every one who is of the Truth heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37).

sonship to the *source* of sonship. Following the same method of division which we have already found in the previous sections of the Epistle, the Apostle treats of this subject first in relation to God in Christ (iv. 1—6), and then in relation to our brother-man (7—12). He who rightly confesses God in Christ, and who proves the sincerity of that faith by love to the brethren, does so by the sole aid of the Holy Spirit of God, and it is thus proved that he is born of God.

This possession of the Holy Spirit, this abiding of God in us, is first illustrated by its opposite. The denial of Christ is a sign that we are under the sway of spirits which are not from God, even the spirits of false prophecy and of Antichrist. The characteristic of the men whom these spirits deceive is to deny the Lord that bought them,[1] and to apostatise from the worship of Christ to the worship of the Beast.[2] That such spirits were at work even thus early we have already seen in the warnings of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Jude. And the peril which they caused was enhanced by this; they were at work in the bosom of the Church itself. When St. John says that they have gone forth into the world, he does not mean that they are severed from the Church, for if this had been the case there would have been no need to test them, or to be on guard against them, since, as regards the Christian community, they would have stood self-condemned. But while still nominally belonging to the visible Church, the nature of their teaching stamped them as belonging really to the world. Every Christian, therefore, had need to "test the spirits;" he was required to exercise that

[1] 2 Pet. ii. 2. [2] Rev. xiii. 8.

grace of "the discernment of spirits" to which St. Paul had called the attention of his Corinthian converts.[1] In Corinth the terrible abuses of glossolaly had led to outbreaks which entirely ruined and degraded the order of worship. Amid the hubbub of fanatical utterances voices had even been heard to exclaim "Anathema is Jesus." Those hideous blasphemies, due to secret hatred and heresy, had sheltered themselves under the plea of uncontrollable spiritual impulse, and St. Paul had laid down as distinctly as St. John, and almost in the same terms, that the confession of Jesus as Lord could only come from the workings of the Holy Spirit of God, and that any one who spoke against Jesus, however proud his claims, *could* not be speaking by the Spirit of God. It is interesting to find the two Apostles so exactly in accord with one another. It is even difficult to imagine that St. John could have written this passage without having in mind what St. Paul had said to the Corinthians.[2] But even if not, we have another proof how absurd is the theory which places the two Apostles in deadly antagonism, whereas again and again there is a close resemblance between them, not only in the expressions which they use, but also in the entire systems which they maintain.

Here, then, was to be the test which each Christian could apply. Every spirit was of God who confessed "*Jesus Christ come in the flesh.*" There were even in those early days professing Christians who said that Jesus was indeed the Christ, but that the Christ had not come in the flesh. They maintained that during the public ministry of Jesus, the spirit of the Divine Christ had been with Him, but only till the crucifixion;

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 10. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

so that the Incarnation of the Divine in the human nature was nothing but a semblance. These were the forerunners of the sect of Docetists. There were others, again, who regarded the life of Jesus as homogeneous throughout, but denied that he was the Christ in any other sense than that He was the Jewish Messiah; denied that he was Christ in the sense of being the Son of God. These were the early Ebionites. Against them both St. John had erected his eternal barrier of sacred testimony when he wrote "The Word became flesh," a testimony which he here repeats, and which he expresses no less plainly in verse 14, when he says, "We have seen and do testify that the Father has sent His Son as Saviour of the World." Every spirit was from God which, speaking in the mouths of Christian prophets, confessed that Jesus who was a man was also the Incarnate Son of God.

The next verse (3) begins in the Authorised Version, "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." The first correction which must be made to bring back this verse to the true reading is to omit the words "*Christ is come in the flesh.*" Not only are they omitted by the Sinaitic, Alexandrian, and Vatican MSS., and absent from the Vulgate, Coptic, and Æthiopic versions, but also it is more accordant with St. John's manner to vary the form of his antithetic clauses. The meaning, however, remains the same, for by "confessing Jesus" nothing can be meant but confessing that He is the Incarnate Son of God. But in my version I have ventured to follow the other reading, "Every spirit WHICH SEVERS JESUS" (ὁ λύει). It is a reading of deep interest, and one which, if it be genuine, proves very decidedly the

working of those Gnostic speculations—at least in their germs—which is also presupposed in the later Epistles of St. Paul. The authenticity of those Epistles has often been denied, on the ground that they are devoted to the refutation of heresies which, it is asserted, had no existence till at least the second century. I have already endeavoured to show that there is no weight in this argument;[1] but if the reading "which severs Jesus" be indeed the original one, it furnishes the clearest indication of the direction taken from the first by Gnostic error.[2] The Docetæ and Ebionites had already begun to "sever Jesus"—to say that He was a man to whom for a time only the Spirit of God had been united, or that He was a man only and not the Son of God at all.

It need, however, be hardly said that the interesting character of a reading furnishes no ground for accepting it. But we are under no temptation to introduce it on dogmatic grounds, seeing that even without it we have sufficient indication of the existence of these sects.

At first sight it might seem to be fatal to the reading that it is not found in any existing manuscript. This fact must perhaps suffice to exclude it from any accepted text of the Greek Testament, yet this seems to me to be exactly one of those cases in which the reading of the existing MSS. is outweighed by other authorities and other considerations.[3] In the first place, the reading is found in the Vulgate. Then, Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, tells us that Nestorius "was ignorant

[1] See my *Life of St. Paul*, ii. 620. [2] See *supra*, p. 349.

[3] To express the same thing technically, the *diplomatic* is outweighed by the *paradiplomatic* evidence.

that *in the ancient manuscripts* of the Catholic Epistle of John *it had been written* that, 'Every spirit WHICH SEVERS JESUS is not from God.'"[1] He adds, that those who wished to sever the Divinity of Jesus from His Humanity, "took away this sense (*ταύτην τὴν διάνοιαν ἐκ τῶν παλαίων ἀντιγράφων περιεῖλον*) from the ancient manuscripts." How Düsterdieck and others can here maintain that Socrates does not mean to assert that the reading "severs Jesus" *was actually found* in these old manuscripts, is more than I can understand. There is no other reason for mentioning the manuscripts at all. Socrates clearly means to charge the Nestorians with the falsification of the text. Irenæus also, in denying all claim of Christian orthodoxy to those who, under pretence of *gnosis*, drew distinctions between Jesus and Christ, between the Only Begotten and the Saviour, refers to this passage and quotes it, "Et omnis spiritus QUI SOLVIT JESUM non est ex Deo."[2] Origen, again, on Matt. xxv. 14, quotes the verse in the same way, and adds "we thus reserve for each substance its own proper attributes."[3] Again, Tertullian, in referring to the first, second, and third verses of this chapter, sums them up in the words "Joannes Apostolus . . . . antichristos dicit *processisse in mundum* (verse 1) . . . . negantes Christum *in carne venisse* (verse 2), et *solventes* Jesum" (verse 3).[4]

[1] *ἠγνόησεν ὅτι ἐν τῇ καθολικῇ Ἰωάννου ἐγέγραπτο ἐν τοῖς παλαίοις ἀντιγράφοις ὅτι πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ λύει τὸν Ἰησοῦν κ.τ.λ.* (Socrates, *H. E.* vii. 32).

[2] Iren. *c. Haer.* iii. 8.

[3] "Haec autem dicentes non SOLVIMUS suscepti corporis hominem, cum sit scriptum apud Joannem, 'Omnis Spiritus qui SOLVIT Jesum non est ex Deo,' sed unicuique substantiae proprietatem servamus" (Origen, *l.c.*).

[4] Tert. *adv. Marc.* v. 16, and *adv. Psych.*, "*quod Jesum Christum solvant.*"

Once more, St. Augustine has the expression, "He *severs Jesus*, and denies that He has come in the flesh." Against these testimonies—unmistakable as they are—it is usual to urge the supposed silence of Polycarp, who, in his letter to the Philippians, says, "but every one who does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is Antichrist." Clearly, however, this may be a general reference to the second verse, and furnishes no proof that the reading "severs" may not have occurred in this third verse even in Polycarp's time. That he should not quote it is sufficiently accounted for by its difficulty. There is a compression in it which requires explanation. It involved a profound and prescient allusion to heresies which as yet were vague and undeveloped. It needed for its full understanding the light which was to be thrown upon it by subsequent history, when heresy after heresy was occupied in "*severing*" the One Person, or isolating one or other of the Two Natures. When we consider the proofs that the reading did really exist in early texts; that there was every temptation to add explanatory glosses to explain its difficulty; that it was easy for such an explanatory gloss as "*does not confess*" to creep in from the previous text; that the explanatory gloss "*Christ come in the flesh*" has actually so crept in; that the later addition is easily accounted for by the need of explaining the words "who does not confess Jesus," words which by themselves gave no adequate meaning; that, lastly, it is St. John's almost invariable manner—a manner founded on the laws of the Hebrew parallelism in which he had been trained—to introduce into the second clause of his antitheses some weighty additional element of thought;—when we remember, lastly,

what force there is in this old reading—what a flash of insight it involves—then we may be reasonably confident that it represents what St. John really wrote. Nothing but its difficulty led to its early obliteration from the common texts. We have, then, this result;—that *the disintegration of the divine and the human in the nature of Jesus* was the distinguishing characteristic of the spirit of Antichrist. It is, he adds, the spirit which speaks out of worldly inspiration, and meets with worldly approval; but they who are of God have prevailed over the Antichrists by holding fast—unshaken, unseduced, unterrified—their good confession.

The power to make this good confession comes from the Spirit of God; and so also does the power to love our brethren.

"Beloved, let us love one another. For Love is from God, and every one that loveth hath been born of God, and recogniseth God. He that loveth not never recognised God, because *God is love.*[1] Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent His Son, His only begotten, into the world, that we may live by Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if thus God loved us, we also ought to love one another. God no one has ever seen. If we love one another God abideth in us, and His love has been perfected in us" (iv. 7—12).

In the deep language of St. John, the recognition of God—the learning to know Him (γινώσκειν)—is a much greater attainment than merely knowing *about* Him, and having *heard* of Him. "The knowledge of the Divine involves a spiritual likeness to the Divine, and rests upon a possession of the Divine." And this

[1] See Aug. *de Trinitate*, ix. 2. "God is Love," a sentence which is the summary and most simple expression of what the Scripture—the whole Scripture—teaches us throughout" (Hofmann).

possession of the Divine emanates in love; love must of necessity radiate from its central light. The hatred which wells from a fountain of inward darkness proves at once that the knowledge and love of God does not exist in the heart of him who hates. His hatred is the more, not the less, guilty if it tries to hide itself under a cloak of religiousness. FOR GOD IS LOVE. If Light be His metaphysical essence, Love is His ethical nature. The unfathomable and inconceivable fulness of life which is named Light is, from eternity to eternity, existent only under the form of Love. If, then, God is Love, everything which He does must have love for its sole aim, and must, therefore, be a communication of Himself. Every one who knows Him is born of Him, for "Him truly to know is life eternal;" and every one who is born of Him is a child of Light, and reflects His Light in the form of love. For He has sent His Son into the world to give us life; and this life manifests itself in us as love, which is thus of its very nature Divine. The love we are enabled to show is not earthly, not human, not animal—it is Divine. It is an effluence of the Love of God poured into our hearts, and streaming forth from them upon others. St. John is not here speaking of the mere slightly expanded egotism of family affections, or personal likings; he is speaking of *Christian* love, of the love of man as man. That love is a flame from the Divine flame. Christ rendered it possible when He died as a propitiation *for* us; it becomes actual when He is Christ *in* us. When we possess the Light it will certainly shine before men. No one has ever *seen* God; our fellowship with Him is not *visible*. But it is much nearer, for it is spiritual. He is not only with us, He is

in us; and, therefore, His Love, in all its perfection, dwells within us, proving its existence by continuous love to all our brethren, whether in the Church or in the world.

Then follows the summary of the last two sections:—

"Hereby we recognise that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He hath given to us of His Spirit. And we have beheld, and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son as a Saviour of the world. He who has confessed that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God. And we have learnt to know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is Love, and he who abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him" (iv. 13—16).

These verses state the conclusion to which the Apostle has led us—namely, that neither confession of Christ nor love to the brethren are possible without the aid of the Holy Spirit of God. If, then, we have so confessed Christ, and if we love the brethren, we have received the Spirit of God, and, therefore, have fellowship with God, and are His sons. We abide in Him, and He in us. It only remains to show that this gives us the confidence (*παῤῥησία*) of which he had spoken in ii. 28, at the very beginning of the entire section.

"By this" (i.e. by all that I have now urged[1]) "love hath been perfected with us,[2] in order that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as He (Christ) is, we also are in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment, but he that feareth hath not been perfected in love"[3] (iv. 17, 18).

[1] *ἐν τούτῳ*, as in ii. 6, refers to what precedes, as in John iv. 37, xvi. 30.

[2] "With us"—*i.e.*, in the midst of the Church. "God magnified His mercy *with her* (*μετ' αὐτῆς*)" (Luke i. 58).

[3] "We received not the spirit of slavery again to fear, but ye received the spirit of adoption" (Rom. viii. 15). There is, of course, a *righteous*

The best comment on the first of these verses will be found in the discourses of our Lord in John xvii. 14—26. If we have the fellowship with God of which he has spoken, then, though the Church is still in the world, we have become like Christ, and may answer with boldness on the Judgment Day. For, just as we are condemned already if, by not believing, we have rejected the Light for the darkness—so, if we have believed, we anticipate the sentence of acquittal. Fear is inseparable from the self-condemnation which results from being separated from God; it is an anticipated punishment; it cannot co-exist with love; where it exists, there the love is not real love, for it is still imperfect and impure.

Thus, then, St. John has completed one great part of his announced design. He has written in order that Christians may have fellowship with God, and fellowship with one another, and that so their joy may be full. It will and must be full if they have perfect confidence; if, being at one with God—they in Him, and He in them—they look forward with perfect confidence even to that hour when they shall stand at the judgment-seat of God. Here he might have closed this part of his subject; but in one last retrospect (iv. 19; v. 5) he shows that, though hitherto he has treated of our relation to God and our relation to our brethren in separate sections, the two relations are, in reality, indissolubly one. And for this purpose he gathers together all the leading conceptions on which he has been dwelling—namely, "be-

fear (Ps. xix.), but it has in it no alarm or terror. The highest state of all is to be without fear, and with love; the lowest to be "with fear, but without love;" or, without either fear or love (see Bengel, *ad loc.*). "Timor est custos et paedagogus legis, donec veniat caritas" (Aug.).

lieving on Christ" (v. 5) as the principle (positively) of "keeping God's commandments" (v. 2), and (negatively) of "conquering the world" (v. 4, 5), and shows that they find their unity in "loving our brother." From love (iv. 19—21), and from faith (v. 1—5), spring alike our duty to God our Father, and our duty to our brother man.

"Let us love, because He first loved us. If any one say I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar: for any one who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, in what way can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this command we have from Him, that he who loveth God, love also his brother" (iv. 19—21).

"Every one who believeth that Jesus is the Christ,[1] has been born of God, and every one who loveth Him that begat loveth also Him who hath been begotten of Him. Hereby we recognise that we love the children of God, when we love God and do His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not heavy,[2] because everything that has been born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory which conquered the world—our faith.[3] Who is he who conquereth the world, except he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (v. 1—5).

In the first of these two sections he exhorts to universal love, and shows that, since God is Invisible,

[1] "In this part of his treatment," says Bengel, "the Apostle skilfully so arranges his mention of Love, that Faith may be observed at the close, as the prow and stern of the whole treatment."

[2] "My yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Matt. xi. 36). "Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis" (Aug.). "His commandments are not grievous because love makes them light; they are not grievous, because Christ gives strength to bear them. Wings are no weight to the bird which they lift up in the air until it is lost in the sky above us, and we see it no more, and hear only its note of thanks. God's commands are no weight to the soul, which, through His Spirit, He upbears to Himself; nay, rather the soul through them the more soars aloft, and loses itself in the Son of God" (Pusey).

[3] Because by faith in Christ we become one with Him, and share in His conquest over the world. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 23).

there are no possible means by which we can manifest our love to Him except by love to man, in whom God is made visible for us. If we neglect these means, our self-asserted love to God, since it fails to meet the test of action, can be nothing but a lie. For though God is Unseen, yet His Presence is represented to us by man; and, again, though God is Unseen, He has revealed to us His will. And the will which He has revealed, the obedience which He requires, is, that we love one another. Not to do so is to violate His commandment, and to insult His image; and he who acts thus cannot love Him.[1]

In the second clause his summary consists in telling us that faith in Jesus as the Christ is a proof of our sonship, and, therefore, can only issue in love to all God's other children. If we are loving God, and obeying Him, we cannot fail to recognise in this very love and obedience that they are being manifested by the spirit of Christian brotherhood. It is faith which won the victory over the world; and faith is manifested in love. Thus all the elements of thought are gathered into one. Sonship, Faith, Obedience, conquest of the world are all essentially blended into an organic unity; and Love is at once the result of their existence and the proof that they exist.

SECTION IV.

ASSURANCE.

At this point, then, the Apostle concludes that great main section of his Epistle, which consisted in setting forth the Word as the Word of Life, in order that we

[1] John xiv. 15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments"; xiii. 34, "A new commandment I give you, that ye love one another."

may have fellowship with one another, and with the Father and the Son, and that our joy may be full. But this resulted from the historic revelation of which the Apostles were appointed witnesses. Life springs from the Word; but the Church could only be taught respecting that Word—the Logos who became flesh—by the testimony of the Apostles to His life on earth. Of that testimony in general his readers were well aware. It only remained to say something as to its cogency and its results. This he does in v. 6—9 and 10—12.

The witnesses are these :—

"This is He who came by means of water and blood, Jesus Christ;[1] not by the water only, but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is that which witnesseth because the Spirit is the truth. Because there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and the three tend to the one thing (*viz.*, the possession of Eternal Life in Jesus Christ)"[2] (v. 6—8).

I have, of course, omitted the words "on earth" and the verse about the three heavenly witnesses.[3] The

[1] This (see *infra*, p. 463) can only refer primarily to historic facts in the Life of Christ. "He came by Water—which is our laver (λούτρον)—and by Blood—which is our ransom (λύτρον)."

[2] Comp. John xvii. 23. "I in them, and Thou in me," ἵνα ὦσι τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν (consummated into one); "brought to a final unity, in which they attain their completeness" (Westcott); see xi. 52. But the meaning *here* is not so certain. I have supposed the words εἰσὶν εἰς ἕν to mean, "are for"—*i.e.*, make for "one thing," viz., the truth in question, "*in unum consentiunt.*" But the "one thing" may be "that Jesus is the Christ." Wordsworth renders it, "are joined into one substance," which suits John xvii. 23, but hardly this passage. Reuss's "*Ces trois sont d'accord,*" is a mere untenable paraphrase.

[3] They were first *translated* in the Zürich Bible, 1529, and in Luther's edition of 1534. First they were printed in smaller type, or in brackets, but after 1596 without any distinction. In Greek they were first printed in the Complutensian edition of 1514, and the 3rd edition of Erasmus. In his editions of 1516 and 1518 he omitted them, but having pledged himself to introduce them if found in a single Greek manuscript, he did

spuriousness of that verse is as absolutely demonstrable as any critical conclusion can be. It is omitted in all Greek manuscripts before the sixteenth century; it was unknown to any one of the Greek Fathers before the thirteenth century; it is not found (except by later interpolation) in a single ancient version; it does not occur in any one of some fifty lectionaries which contain the rest of the passage; in the East it was never once used in the Arian controversy. The only traces of it are in some of the Latin Fathers, and even then in a manner which seems to show that, though the verse may have been a marginal annotation, it did not occur in the actual text.[1] Had it ever been in the original, its disappearance is simply inconceivable, for it contains a clearer statement of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity than any other in the whole Bible. This, perhaps, is the reason why it has been so vigorously defended. But not to dwell on the gross immorality of defending a passage manifestly spurious because of its doctrinal usefulness, the passage is not in the least needed as a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, which, even without it, is in this very paragraph distinctly indicated (vss. 6, 9). The demonstrable spuriousness of the verse renders it,

so, though believing the MS. to be corrupt—"Ne cui sit ansa calumniandi." On their appearance in a lectionary in 1549, Bergenhagen said, "Obsecro chalcographos et eruditos viros ut illam additionem omittant et restituant Graeca suae priori integritati et puritati propter veritatem."

[1] The first distinct quotation of the words is by Vigilius Thapsensis, at the end of the fifth century. "If the fourth century knew that text, let it come in, in God's name; but if that age did not know it, then Arianism in its height was beat down without the aid of that verse; and let the fact prove as it will, the *doctrine* is unshaken" (Bentley). It is not impossible that some transcribers may have taken them from St. Cyprian, and written them as a gloss on the margin of his MS. (Wordsworth refers to Valcknaer, *de Glossis in N. T.*)

then, unnecessary to show that it breaks and disfigures the reasoning of the passage, because it belongs to a totally different order of ideas. There can be little doubt that it will disappear, as it ought to disappear, from the text of any revised version of the English Bible.[1]

But, omitting the spurious words, what does the passage mean? It has a very deep and true meaning, for which, if Renan had sought more patiently and more reverently, he would not have called it an "Elchasaite fantasticality."[2]

He says that Jesus Christ came by means of water and blood, and that the water and the blood are, with the Spirit, three witnesses, which give one converging testimony. As to what they testify, he himself tells us —it is, that God gave us Eternal Life, and that this life is in His Son. And such being the high truth to which they bear witness, it is most important for us to understand in what way their testimony is valid—nay, in what sense it can be called a testimony at all. In what sense, then, did Jesus, as Christ—that is, Jesus as Son of God—come by water and blood? And how do this water and blood constitute two separate witnesses?

It would be simply impossible for any one to answer this question who had not the Gospel before him. The notion of "Witness" is one that plays a very prominent part in the writings of St. John. To him Christianity is emphatically "the Truth," *i.e.* the eternal, all-comprehensive Reality, which must pervade alike the thoughts and the actions of men.[3] But the Truth, so

[1] This anticipation was written before the Revised Version was published in June, 1881.

[2] In *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1877.

[3] John i. 14, 17; viii. 32, 40; xiv. 17; xv. 26; xvi. 13; xvii. 11, 17; xviii. 37.

far as it rests on outward facts, must be brought home to men's hearts by "witness." This, of course, was necessary from the first; but it was more than ever necessary in the days when but few could bear the testimony first-hand, and when many had begun to cavil and to doubt.

Now, in the Gospel, St. John has adduced and elaborated a sevenfold witness;[1] 1, that of the Father (v. 31—37; viii. 18); 2, that of Christ Himself (viii. 14; xviii. 37); 3, that of His works (v. 36; x. 25); 4, that of Scripture (i. 45; v. 39, 40, 45); 5, that of John the Baptist (i. 7; v. 33); 6, that of the Disciples (xv. 27; xix. 35; xxi. 24); and, 7, that of the Spirit (xv. 26; xvi. 14). These seven include every possible form of witness. The first two are inward and Divine; the next two are outward and historical; the fifth and sixth are personal and experiential, depending on the capacity and truthfulness of righteous men; the last is continuous and irrefragable.

Again, in this Epistle, though St. John alludes to the witness of God (v. 9), and of Christ (v. 6), and to the witness of the Apostles (i. 2; iv. 14), and to the witness of the Spirit (v. 6), he does not allude to the four other forms of witness, though he adds to them the witness of absolute inward assurance (v. 10) to which they give rise. And he lays special stress on the water and the blood as the two separate and powerful testimonies of the Christ to His own Divinity. Now, in what way did He manifest Himself to be the Divine Saviour by water and by blood?

Clearly not by the Baptism of John, where the water played a most subordinate part, seeing that it was not

[1] See Westcott's *St. John*, pp. xlv.—xlvii.

by the water, but by the Spirit descending as a dove, that He was consecrated to His work.

Nor, again, by the Sacrament of Baptism, because in no conceivable sense of the words could it be said that "Christ *came*" by means of Christian baptism; nor is the institution of Baptism mentioned, though the symbolic significance of water—which, in that Sacrament, reaches its highest point—is indeed alluded to. Water, in the Gospel, is the symbol of new and saving life,[1] as it also is in Is. xii. 3. More generally and simply, it is the symbol of purification. When our Lord speaks of "being born of water, and of the Spirit," the two things symbolised are seen in their unity—the water is the sacramental instrument of spiritual regeneration into a holy life.

Yet, since even thus the expression that Christ *came* "by the medium of water" would be strange, and by no means easy of interpretation, we must wait to see what light may be thrown upon it by the following expression, that Christ also came "by means of blood."

Here, again, it is obvious that the *primary* allusion cannot be to the Lord's Supper. The word "came" has, in St. John, a special and emphatic meaning. It implies the *manifestation of Christ as the Redeemer*. It cannot, then, be said, on any ordinary principle of interpretation, that Christ "came" by instituting the Lord's Supper. And that St. John, at least, would not have used a term so vague is clear, because there would be no explanation of it in the Gospel. There he has not so much as mentioned the institution of the Lord's Supper, though—in a manner which we have already seen to be characteristic of him—he has indicated its deepest

[1] John iii. 5; iv. 10; vii. 38.

meaning. Further than this, in all direct allusions to the Lord's Supper, the wine is never severed from the bread, the blood from the flesh. Indeed, for the interpretation of what St. John means by "blood," we need go no further than this Epistle,[1] where he mentions the blood of Christ as that which cleanses us from all sin.[2]

So far, then, we have seen that by "water" and "blood" St. John means the symbols respectively of purification and of redemption—of regeneration and of atonement;[3] and so far it may also be truly said that there may be an indirect and secondary allusion to the Sacraments, just as there is in the third and sixth chapters of the Gospel, because in the Sacraments the symbolism of the water and the blood finds its culminating application.

But even yet we have not seen how it can be said that "Christ *came by means of* water and blood," as the *means through which*, and "*in* the water and the blood" as the *element in which* He came. And it is no small corroboration of the suggestion that the Epistle was meant to accompany the Gospel as a kind of practical commentary upon it, that it would be impossible to find any simple or adequate explanation unless we had the Gospel in our hands. We find it there in a fact recorded by St. John alone, but placed by him in such marked prominence, and corroborated by such solemn testimony, that the allusion in this passage to

[1] John vi. This discourse, interpreted by the known rules of Hebrew symbolism, is a most important protection against the superstitions with which literalism, and materialism, and ecclesiasticism, have surrounded the subject of the Lord's Supper. It shows, as plainly as language can show, that by "eating His flesh, and drinking His blood," our Lord meant the living appropriation of Himself by Faith.

[2] i. 7. [3] ii. 2; iv. 10.

the fact so emphasized cannot be mistaken. For *in these two passages alone, of all Scripture, are blood and water placed together*, and, as if to show yet farther the connexion between them, they are in both places prominently associated with the notion of witness. The *fact* is, that the soldier, coming to break the legs of the crucified, in order that their bodies might be removed before the sabbath, finding that Christ was dead, did not break His legs, "but one of the soldiers, with a lancehead, gashed His side, and FORTHWITH CAME THEREOUT BLOOD AND WATER."[1] Now if this were simply a physical fact, arising from the death of Jesus by rupture of the heart, and the natural separation of the blood into *placenta* and *serum*, both of which flowed forth when the pericardium was pierced,[2] even then (though in this case there can only have been, at most, a drop or two of water, visible, perhaps, to St. John[3] only, as he stood close by the cross), the symbols would not lose their divine significance. This circumstance in the death of Christ—which, if natural, is still to the last degree abnormal and unusual—would, even in that case, most powerfully suggest the symbolism which St. John attaches to it. It would have suggested to St. John the thought that Christ came—that is, manifested Himself as the Divine Redeemer—by virtue of the regenerating and atoning power of which the water and the blood were symbolic.[4] But it is doubtful whether the

[1] John xix. 34.

[2] See Dr. Stroud, *The Physical Cause of the Death of Christ*, and my *Life of Christ*, ii. 424. In my view of this passage I entirely follow Haupt.

[3] It is natural to suppose that, after conducting the Virgin to his home, St. John returned.

[4] "Why water? why blood? Water to cleanse, blood to redeem"—Ambr. (*De Sacr.* v. 1).

alleged fact ever naturally occurs; nor is it probable that St. John had enough scientific knowledge to be aware that *if* it occurs it must be a sign of death; nor is it his object to show that the death was real, since at that early period—and, indeed, till long afterwards—the reality of the death was never for a moment questioned.[1] In the Gospel, as here, the fact is appealed to "that we may believe;" it is adduced as a witness that Jesus is the Son of God. Consequently, there as well as here, we must suppose that in St. John's view there was something supernatural in the circumstance; and that there was an obvious mystery—that is, the obvious revelation of a truth previously unknown—in that which it signified. The water and the blood are witnesses, because, in the culminating incident of Christ's redemptive work, their flowing from His side set the seal to His manifestation as a Saviour, and because they are the symbols of a living continuance of that work in the world. The Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood are three witnesses; but it is more especially and emphatically the Spirit that beareth witness, because it is through the Spirit that the witness of the Water and the Blood—that is, of Christ's regenerative and atoning power—is brought home to the human heart. Thus "the trinity of witnesses furnish one testimony." Their threefold testimony is, as he proceeds to tell us, the testimony of God—

"If we accept the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, because[2] He hath witnessed concerning His Son. He who believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in

[1] It will be seen that subsequent study has a little modified the view which I took of this circumstance in the *Life of Christ*, ii. 424.

[2] ὅτι (A, B, Vulg., Copt., Armenian, &c.), not ἣν, is the true reading.

Himself: any one who believeth not on God hath made Him a liar, because he hath not believed in the witness which God hath witnessed about His Son. And this is the witness that God gave to us Eternal Life, and this life is in His Son. He who hath the Son hath the life; any one who hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (vs. 9—12)

In these verses the witness is further analysed. It is not mere human witness. It is human in so far as the facts alluded to are established by Apostolic testimony; but it is infinitely more. It is divine testimony, and it is divine testimony echoed and confirmed by inward witness. If it be objected that the Purification, and the Redemption, and the quickening Spirit, are only in any case witnesses to the believer—that they are subjective, not objective, the answer is twofold. First that St. John is writing to believers, and thinking of believers only; and, secondly, that both the perfected witness of God (*μεμαρτύρηκε*)—perfected in the death of Christ and the results which sprang therefrom; and the continuous witness of the Spirit—continuous in every conversion and every sacrament—are indeed primarily witnesses to believers, but, through believers, they are witnesses to all the world. Believers alone possessed Eternal Life, and it was their unanimous witness that they received it solely through Jesus Christ the Son of God. The echo of the divine witnesses in the lives of Christians reverberated the divine testimony in thousands of echoes through all the world. The "*Nos soli innocentes*" of Tertullian,[1]—We alone, amid

The *repeated* ὅτι is no doubt harsh and slightly ambiguous, for the second ὅτι might mean "that." For these reasons, or perhaps by a mere slip, it was altered into the easier ἤν. But the meaning is, "we ought to believe (1) because this is *God's* witness; and (2) because He *has* borne witness concerning His Son."

[1] Tert. *Apol.* 45.

the deep and gross and universal corruption of a Pagan world, live innocent and holy lives—was the one argument which the heathen found it most impossible to resist or overthrow. It was the threefold witness of the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood; multiplied in the life of every Christian, and it became ultimately strong enough for the regeneration of the world. Thus was it that the Word manifested Himself to be that which St. John called Him—"the Word of Eternal Life."

SECTION V.

CONCLUSION.

The remaining verses of the Epistle have an interest more special. St. John has developed his main thesis; he has spoken of the witness by which the truths on which it rested were established. The rest is mainly recapitulatory. It touches again on faith in Christ, on Eternal Life, and on Confidence: and it applies that confidence to the special topic of trust in the efficacy of prayer (vs. 13—17). Then, with three repetitions of the words "we know," he once more alludes to Sonship and Innocence, and severance from the world, and union with God and with Christ, and Eternal Life. And he concludes with a most weighty and pregnant injunction. But so rich was the mind of the Evangelist that, as we shall see, he cannot even recapitulate without the introduction of new and most important thoughts.

"These things have I written to you that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life—to you who believe on the name of the Son of God.

"And this is the confidence which we have towards Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have

the petitions which we have asked from Him. If any man see his brother sinning a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and shall give him life[1]—to those who are sinning a sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death. For that I do not say that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death" (vs. 13—17).

The first verse of this passage sums up once more the aim of the Epistle—to give assurance to all true believers that they have eternal life. Such a belief makes us bold towards God in filial confidence,[2] and like beloved sons we can ask for what we need from our Heavenly Father. But if our minds are filled, if our lives are actuated by Brotherly love,—if our fellowship with God be of necessity fellowship with one another —our prayers will constantly be occupied with our brethren; they will to a large extent be intercessory prayers:—

> "For what are men better than sheep or goats,
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
> Both for themselves and those that call them friend;
> For so the whole round world is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

The importance attached to such prayers by the early Christians, who, in passages like these, are not even thinking of personal prayers for any earthly blessing,

[1] He, the petitioner, shall give life to his brother. St. James exactly in the same sense says that he who converts a brother, "shall save a soul from death" (James v. 20). Nor does this in the least contradict the truth that no man can save his brother, and make atonement unto God for him. Man is but the *instrument* of this deliverance; the real Deliverer is God. (Comp. Jude 23, "And others *save*, pulling them out of the fire.")

[2] The παῤῥησία here does not refer to the Day of Judgment, as in iv. 17, but to trustful prayer, as in iii. 21, 22; and as in Eph. iii. 12; Heb. iv. 16.

may be shown by the fact that there is an allusion to exactly the same kind of intercessory prayer at the very close of the Epistle of St. James. Many a prayer for earthly blessings may be by no means in accordance with the will of God; and St. John finds it here necessary to touch on a prayer which is concerning spiritual things, and which yet he cannot bid a Christian offer. But as regards prayer in general, when a Christian prays he knows that God listens,[1] and he therefore has what he asks for. He has it even if the prayer be denied, for his prayer is not absolutely that something which is contingent may happen, but that God will give him the true and the best answer by making the will of the petitioner to be one with His.[2] Now St. John assumes that the Christian will pray for the salvation of his brethren, but he tells us that there is one instance in which such a prayer will be unavailing. It is when we see our brethren sinning a sin which is unto death. In *other* cases the Christian by prayer shall give his brother life; in the case of a sin which is unto death St. John cannot bid any Christian to offer up his filial, his familiar prayer.[3]

What, then, is this sin unto death? Is it a single act? is it a settled condition? Does it give any countenance to the distinction between mortal and venial sins? Is it the same thing as the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? To enter fully into all these

[1] ἀκούει (John ix. 31; xi. 41, 42).

[2] "We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise Powers
Deny us for our good. So gain we profit
By losing of our prayers."—(Shakspere).

[3] ἐρωτήσῃ. It is remarkable that this word should be used (see *infra*, p. 471).

questions here would be to break the continuity of our endeavour to understand the general scope of the Epistle. I will therefore treat of them as briefly as possible.

1. St. John cannot be thinking of any one definite act of sin (as is indeed sufficiently proved by his use of the present and not the aorist participle), because it would be simply impossible for any man, apart from inspired supernatural insight, to declare that any particular sin was a sin unto death. Saul, under strong temptation, broke a ceremonial commandment of the Prophet Samuel; David committed adultery and murder under conditions which made those crimes peculiarly heinous. Who would not have said *à priori* that the sin of David was infinitely the more deadly of the two? Yet "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul," whereas David was still able to pray that God would give him a new heart and create a right spirit within him—and his prayer was heard. Again, the Pharisees attributed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub, and in so doing we are told that they came perilously near, if they did not actually commit, the sin against the Holy Ghost. The Sadducees and the Romans, on the other hand, crucified Him. Who would not have said that the Sadducees were the worse offenders? Yet Christ prayed unconditionally for His murderers, "Father, forgive them;" and if He gave the unconditional promise to His disciples that "whatsoever they asked in His name, believing, they should receive," must we not regard it as certain that His own prayer was heard? Clearly, then, a sin becomes a sin unto death not by its external characteristics, but by its interior quality, and that interior quality is for the

most part undiscernible by the eye of man. The nature of the consummating act, the nature of the continuous state which constitutes the sin unto death, may be completely disguised, while the offender still walks among men in the odour of sanctity.

> "So spake the false dissembler unperceived;
> For neither man nor angel can discern
> Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
> Invisible, except to God alone,
> By His permissive will, through Heaven and earth;
> And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
> At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
> Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
> Where no ill seems: which now for once beguiled
> Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held
> The sharpest sighted spirit of all in Heaven;
> Who, to the fraudulent impostor foul,
> In his uprightness, answer thus returned."
>
> (*Paradise Lost*, iii. 681—694).

2. There is such a thing—as we have already seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews—as absolute and desperate apostasy, wherein a man cuts himself utterly loose from all the means of grace, and effectually closes their influence upon him. There is such a thing not only as wilful, but even as willing sin. There can be such a thing as a deliberate putting of evil for good and good for evil, of bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter; such a thing as a man selling himself to do evil, and trampling under foot the Spirit of God. This, in the view of the Apostles, is connected with Antichrist; the man who does it is a "man of sin"; it is a deliberate abandonment of Christ for Satan, of light for darkness, of life for death. When such a blaspheming apostasy occurred in the very bosom of the Church, he who was aware that it

had occurred, could only feel that, so far as mere human foresight, or human prayers on his behalf could go, such a man would die in his sin.[1]

3. For such a man a Christian could hardly offer the prayer which is inspired with the divine conviction that it is heard; for it is impossible, humanly speaking, to renew such a man unto repentance.[2] St. John feels that he must refrain from exhorting Christians to offer the highest kind of prayer[3]—such prayers as Christ offered, and which are scarcely ever predicated of any other—for the most consummate form of sin.[4]

4. Yet it does not seem that he *forbids* even such prayers.[5] He *could* not do so, for he gives no criterion by which his readers could discern what was, and what was not, a sin unto death. He only says, "when you see your brother sinning a sin which you know may be forgiven"—and they would learn from the entire history of the Old Testament, as well as from the Gospels, that this might be any sin however apparently heinous, were it even such a sin as that which had stained the Church of Corinth, and against which the very heathen had exclaimed—"you may pray for it with the conviction that God will hear your

[1] John viii. 21—24.

[2] Heb. vi. 4—6, and on that passage see *Riehm, Lehrbegr. d. Hebräerbriefs*, ii. 763, *fg.*

[3] ἐρωτήσῃ. The word αἰτῶ (*peto*), is used of the petition of an inferior; ἐρωτῶ (*rogo*), of the more familiar entreaties of a friend. Hence our Lord never uses αἰτῶ of His own prayers; and never uses ἐρωτῶ of the prayers of the Disciples (John xiv. 16; xvi. 26; xvii. 9, 15, 20; which show that St. John felt and observed the distinction). We may humbly αἰτεῖν the forgiveness of sins not unto death; we may not even ἐρωτᾶν those of sins unto death.

[4] By a "sin unto death," St. John meant absolute and wilful apostacy from, and abnegation of, Christ, both theoretically and practically.

[5] "Ora, si velis, sed sub dubio impetrandi" (Calvin).

prayer. But," he adds, "you must not expect that, in every possible case, every prayer you offer for the sin of a brother will be heard. For there is a sin unto death. Not respecting that sin am I saying that a Christian should make filial request." His prayers must in such cases take a humbler form (*αἰτεῖν*); they must inevitably be offered up with a less implicit confidence that they will be heard; they must rather consist of a committal of the sinner to God's mercy than an assured petition that that mercy will be extended in the form which we desire.

5. We may perhaps derive some insight into the meaning of the sin unto death from the language of the Old Testament, with the meanings which the Jews inferred from it, and from those passages in the New Testament which seem to offer the nearest parallel.

a. As regards the Old Testament, we find the phrase "a sin unto death" (LXX. *hamartia thanatephoros*) in Num. xviii. 22,[1] Lev. xxii. 9,[2] but this does not greatly help us, because there the reference merely is to sins which were punished with death, whereas St. John is, of course, referring to spiritual death, as in iii. 14.

β. Nor, again, is much light thrown on the passage by the crimes to which excision—"cutting off from the —people" is assigned as a penalty under the Mosaic

[1] "Sin with high hand," Numb. xv. 30; Matt. xii. 31 (Schöttgen, *ad loc.*).

[2] חֵטְא לָמוּת. The references are to the approach of non-Levitical persons to the sanctuary, and neglect of Levitical purifications. The Rabbis divided sins into חטאה למיתא and חטאה לא למיתה, "a sin unto death," and "not unto death." In the Talmud we find "*Five* have no forgiveness of sins—(1) He who keeps on sinning and repenting alternately; (2) he who sins in a sinless age; (3) he who sins on purpose to repent; (4) he who causeth the name of God to be blasphemed." The fifth is left unexpressed (Avoth d' Rab. Nathan, 39).

law. Whatever interpretation be attached to those words—whether death by divine interposition, as the Rabbis thought, or by the hand of the civil power, as others think, or exile, or excommunication[1]—it is quite clear that the sins upon which this excision (*careth*) is denounced are not unpardonable, not beyond the reach of repentance and forgiveness.

γ. Again, in no less than three places, Jeremiah is forbidden to pray for the Jews (Jer. vii. 16; xi. 14; xiv. 11); yet we certainly may not infer that the case of all these Jews was eternally hopeless, or that though they were put beyond the range of the prayers of men, they were therefore for ever excluded from the tender mercies of God.

δ. In the New Testament we find St. Paul twice using the expression "delivering to Satan." The offenders to whom he applies it are the Corinthian sensualist (1 Cor. v. 5), and Hymenæus, and Alexander (1 Tim. i. 20). Again, for Alexander the Coppersmith, in 2 Tim. iv. 14, St. Paul offers no prayer but this, "May the Lord reward him according to his works." Now it is a reasonable inference that while a man was under the sentence of the Church's excommunication—while he was thus deliberately cut off by their act from the means of grace—he would not have been included in their prayers; not, at any rate, in such prayers as they were wont to offer up for one another. We see the character of the sins of these men. The sins of Hymenæus and Alexander consisted in deliberately rejecting (ἀπωσάμενοι "pushing away from themselves") faith and a good conscience, and, in consequence, making shipwreck of their faith.

[1] See Gesen. *Thes. s. v.* כרת, p. 719.

St. Paul delivered them to Satan. Why? In order that they might perish everlastingly? Far from it; but for a merciful and hopeful purpose—"that they may be trained not to blaspheme." A worse case cannot be imagined than that of the Corinthian offender. He was a Church-member, admitted into full fellowship, even supported by public sanction, and yet he was living in the open practice of a sin so shameful that, as St. Paul says, "it is not so much as named among the heathen." No conduct could be more infamous, not only in itself, but also because it caused the name of Christ to be blasphemed in that vile heathen world. With intense and burning indignation, St. Paul imagines himself present in spirit in the assembly of the Christian Church, and there solemnly, in the name of Christ, he "hands over the offender to Satan." If any sin could be regarded as a sin unto death, must not this have been such a sin, seeing that it was shameless, continuous, against light and knowledge, the sin of a Christian which was not even tolerated by heathens? It was natural that the victorious prayer of triumphant confidence should be suspended in the case of such a man. Yet what is St. Paul's object in handing him to Satan? Not by any means his everlasting damnation, but "the destruction of his carnal impulses, *in order that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*"[1] The man *was* handed to Satan by the now-aroused conscience of the startled community. And what was the result? In his next letter, a few months afterwards, St. Paul is once more urging them to show mercy towards this very offender. The "handing to

[1] 1 Cor. v. 5.

Satan" has done its work. The fleshly temptation has been annihilated. The man has repented. St. Paul is now afraid lest he should be injured by over severity. He bids them restore and ratify their love towards the now penitent transgressor, "lest by any means he should be swallowed up by his superabundant sorrow."[1] Similarly, in the case of Alexander, St. Paul's *avoidance* of a prayer for him *is* practically a prayer for him. It is not equivalent—as is sometimes supposed—to a sort of curse, "May God do him evil as he has done to me;" for such a prayer—though a David or a Hebrew exile may have offered it in ignorance, in days before the new commandment had been uttered—in days when it had been said to them of old time, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy"—could not have been offered without sin by a Christian Apostle. St. Paul's ejaculation is only another way of saying "It is not for me to judge him; I leave him in the hands of God."

From this examination then we may infer that St. John's limitation belongs, like so many of his thoughts, to the region of the ideal, the theoretical, the absolute; that it is only introduced as a passing, but very solemn, reminder of the truth that there is a sin which is past the possibility of being benefited by the Christian's prayer; a sin which can be only left to God, because it is discernible by Him alone. Practically it is most unlikely that we shall ever become cognisant of any sin in a brother so heinous, so desperate, so darkly deliberate in the apostate condition of heart which it implies, so obviously beyond the possibility of repentance, that we dare not pray for it. On the analogy of the language used, both in the Old and New Testaments, we must

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 6—8.

infer that even though there be a sin unto death, it is not beyond the mercy of Him who died "that He might destroy him who hath the power of death, that is the devil." To God we may leave it, if we find that we are unable to offer up on its behalf the prayer of faith. How little we are ever likely to realise the existence of such a sin we may infer from this—that there are only two or three in all the long generations of Christian history about whose salvation the Church has ever ventured to express an open doubt.

We are told in the Talmud that Beruriah, the wife of the great Rabbi Meier, once heard him ardently praying to God against some ignorant people — *am haratsim*—who annoyed him. She came to him and said, "Do you do this because it is written (in Ps. civ. 35) 'Let the sinners be consumed'? But there it is not written *chotaim*, 'sinners,' but *chittaim*, 'sins.' Besides, the Psalm adds, 'And let the wicked be no more,' that is to say, 'Let sins cease, and the wicked will cease too.' Pray, therefore, on their behalf, that they may be led to repentance, and these wicked will be no more." This he therefore did, and they repented, and ceased to vex him.[1]

The whole tenor of Scripture shows that, as a rule, we must herein follow the example of the brilliant Rabbi. But the New Testament teaches the lesson far more fully than the Old. The Church herself teaches us to pray—

> "That it may please Thee to have mercy upon ALL MEN,
> We beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord."

And accordingly St. John instantly leaves the subject of the sin unto death to which he has made this unique and

[1] Avodah Zarah, f. 18, *b*.

passing allusion, and adds "All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death." Therefore you will ever have the amplest scope for your intercessory supplications. Practically, that scope is the whole range of unrighteousness, the whole range of human sin. If the sin for which we are interceding is a sin which God knows, and which we may *fear* to be unto death, St. John does not *forbid* such prayers; for he says, "I do not say that you should" (*οὐ λέγω ἵνα*), not "I say that you should not" (*λέγω ἵνα μὴ*). Clearly it can *never* be in our power to decide what sins are unto death. If we unwittingly pray for such a sin, the Apostle can give us no promise that the intercession is of any avail. But if there be any sin for which we feel the genuine impulse to pray, we may rest assured that that impulse is an inspiration, and therefore that the prayer may be offered, and will be heard.

Then the Epistle concludes with these words:—

"WE KNOW that every one who has been born of God sinneth not; but he who is born of God keepeth himself,[1] and the wicked one graspeth him not.[2]

"WE KNOW that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one.

"But WE KNOW that the Son of God is come, and hath given us understanding, that we recognise Him who is true, and we are in

[1] It is astonishing that Alford, following the Vulgate, should render this "but he that hath been born of God, *it* (*i.e.* his divine birth) keepeth him" ("sed generatio Dei conservat eum"). There is not the smallest theological difficulty involved in saying that "he keepeth himself" (see on iii. 3). It means that effort is always necessary even for the saint—*οὐ φύσει εἰς ἀναμαρτησίαν προβαίνει* (Œcumen.).

[2] "The Evil one approaches him, as a fly approaches a lamp, but does not injure, does not even touch him" (Bengel). But *ἅπτομαι* with a genitive properly means "to lay hold of." Thus *μή μου ἅπτου* is not *Noli me tangere*, but "Cling not to me" (see my *Life of Christ*, ii. 434).

Him who is true, in His Son, Jesus Christ. This[1] is the true God, and Life Eternal.[2]

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (ver. 18—21).

Here, as before, St. John is beholding all things in their idea. Here, and now, neither are we absolutely sinless, nor is the whole world absolutely absorbed in sin. But in idea, in the ultimate truth of things, it is so, and, in the final severance of things, it will be so. Our knowledge that it is and will be so rests deep among the bases of all Christian faith. We know it because Christ has come, and has given us discernment to recognise Him who is the only Reality. We are in Him, and in His Son; He, God the Father, is the Very God, and Eternal Life.[3] For St. John has already said in his Gospel (xvii. 3), "This is the Life Eternal, that they should learn to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou didst send."

The last verse is a most pregnant warning, introduced by the Apostle's most affectionate title of address —Little children!—"keep yourselves from idols." He is not, of course, thinking of the gods of the heathen. He is writing to Christians who had long abandoned these, who had not the smallest temptation to apostatise to their worship. He is speaking of "subjective idolism." He is putting them on their guard against seductive notions of false prophets; subtle suggestions

[1] Namely, the Father, as seen in His Son (Jer. xl.).

[2] Thus the Epistle ends as it began, with Eternal Life (Bengel). Comp. John xvii. 3.

[3] That the Father is referred to seems to be decided by John xvii. 3. There is nothing abnormal in the change of subject. The Father is the principal subject of the whole clause, though the Son is last named. For a similar change of subject see verse 16, and ii. 22, and 2 John 7.

of Antichrists. He is warning them not against gross idols of gold and jewels, representing deities of lust and blood, but against false, fleeting, dangerous images—idols of the forum, of the theatre, of the cave; systematising inferences of scholastic theology; theories of self-vaunting orthodoxy; semblances under which we represent God which in no wise resemble Him; ever-widening deductions from Scripture grossly misinterpreted; earthly passions and earthly desires which we put in the place of Him; ideas of Him which loom upon us through the lurid mists of earthly fear and earthly hatred; notions of Him which we make for ourselves, which are not He; conceptions of Him which we have derived only from our party-organ or our personal conceit. It is the most pregnant of all warnings against every form of unfaithfulness to God; against violations whether of the First or of the Second Commandment; against devotion to anything which is not eternally and absolutely true; against perversions due to religionism quite as much as against open rejection of God; against the tyrannous shibboleths of aggressive systems no less than against the worship of Belial and of Mammon. These are the idols which in these days also are more perilous to faith and holiness than any which the heathen worshipped. They are dominant in sects and Churches and schools of thought. They are the work, not of men's hands, but of their imaginations. They have mouths, but do not utter words of truth; they have eyes, but not such as can gaze on the true light; they have hands, but they do not the deeds of righteousness; feet have they, but only such as hurry them into error. "They that make them are like unto them; and so are all such as put their

trust in them." Little children—all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth—all who know that hatred is of the devil—all who have recognised that "Love is the fulfilling of the law"—little children, keep yourselves from idols!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

"Amor non modo verus amor est, sed veritate evangelicâ nititur."
BENGEL.

APART from the truths inculcated in such private Epistles as the Second and Third of St. John and that of St. Paul to Philemon, it is a happy Providence which, in spite of their brevity, has preserved them for us during so many hundred years. They show us what grace and geniality reigned in Christian intercourse, and how much there was in this sweet communion of saints which compensated, even on earthly grounds, for the loss of the world's selfish friendships and seductive approbation. The love of the brethren more than counterbalanced the hatred of the enemies of Christ.

That these little letters are genuine there is good reason to believe. They may be treated together, because there can be no question that if either of them is genuine both of them are, since they may well be described as "twin-sisters."[1] Their close resemblance in style, phraseology, and tone of thought, shows that they were written about the same time, and by the same person. Further than this, they agree so closely with the First Epistle that if they were written by another the resemblance could only be accounted for by deliberate imitation. But what possible ground could

[1] Jer. *Ep.* 85.

there be for "forging" letters so slight as these,—letters which, though full of value, do not add a single essential thought to those which are already fully expressed and elaborated in the other writings of St. John? Their very unimportance for any doctrinal purpose, apart from the Gospel, the Apocalypse, and the First Epistle, is one of the proofs that no *falsarius* would have thought it worth his while to palm them off upon the Church. Containing no conception which is not found elsewhere, they have little independent dogmatic value; their chief interest lies in the glimpse which they give us of Christian epistolary intercourse in the earliest days.

The external evidence in their favour is even stronger than we could have expected in the case of compositions so short, so casual, and so unmarked by special features. There is but one passage (vss. 10, 11) in the Second Epistle which can be quoted as distinctive, and for that very reason it is the one to which most frequent reference is made; nor is there anything which specifically characterises the Third except the allusions to Diotrephes and Demetrius. There is scarcely a single expression in either of these letters with which previous writings have not already made us familiar. Indeed, no less than eight out of thirteen verses in the Second Epistle are also to be found in the First. It is not, therefore, surprising that they only became known gradually to the Church, and that they were regarded as comparatively unimportant, being written "out of feelings of private affection, though to the honour of the Catholic Church."[1]

[1] The Muratorian Canon says of the Epistle to Philemon and the two to Timothy, that they were written "*pro affectu* et dilectione in honorem tamen ecclesiae catholicae."

Yet the first of them is twice quoted by Irenæus,[1] and twice referred to by Clemens of Alexandria.[2] Cyprian mentions that the Epistle to the Elect Lady (of course the passage about "heretics"), was quoted by one of the bishops at the Council of Carthage. The testimony of the Muratorian Canon is ambiguous, owing to the corruption of the text, but it seems to tell in favour of the Epistles.[3] The Syrian Church, according to Cosmas Indicopleustes, did not acknowledge these Epistles; but, on the other hand, the Second Epistle is quoted by Ephraem the Syrian. Eusebius and Origen seem to have regarded the Epistles as genuine, though they rank them among the disputed books of the canon—the *antilegomena;* as also does Dionysius of Alexandria, the pseudo-Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia.[4] St. Jerome says that there were many who assigned them to the authorship of "John the Presbyter;" but he seems himself to have accepted them.[5] The notion

[1] Iren. *Haer.* iii. 16, 8; i. 16, 3.

[2] *Strom.* ii. 15, and *Fragm.* p. 1011, ed. Potter (but comp. Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 14); Tert. *De Praescr. Haer.* 33.

[3] See Wieseler, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1847, p. 846. The true reading and punctuation of the passage seems to be "Epistolae sane Judae et superscripti Johannes duae (*or* duas=δυὰς, "a pair") in Catholica habentur." The words which follow, "ut Sapientia ab amicis Salomonis in honorem ipsius scripta," must then be referred to the Apocalypse, as though it wa written by friends of John, as Wisdom by friends of Solomon.

[4] οὐ πάντες φασὶ γνησίας εἶναι ταύτας (Orig. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 25; *Dem. Evang.* iii. 5); εἴτε τοῦ Εὐαγγελιστοῦ τυγχάνουσαι, εἴτε καὶ ἑτέρου ὁμωνύμου ἐκείνῳ (Euseb. iii. 25); φερομένας Ἰωάννου (Dionys. Alex. *ap.* Euseb. vii. 25); ἀντιλέγονται δὲ αἱ λοιπαὶ δύο (Euseb. iii. 24). The pseudo-Chrysostom exaggerates when he says (*Hom.* in Matt. xxi. 23), "the Fathers reject the Second and Third Epistles from the Canon."

[5] "Opinio quam *a plerisque* retulimus traditam" (Jer. *De Virr. Illustr.* 9; but see *Ep.* 85). Cosmas Indicopleustes rejects *all* the Catholic Epistles, but his remarks about them (*De Mundo*, vii. p. 292) are so full of errors as to deserve no notice. Gregory of Nazianzus, in his Iambics, says—"Of the Catholic Epistles, some say that we ought to receive

that they were written by "John the Presbyter" was revived by Erasmus and Grotius, and has since been maintained by some modern scholars.[1] But, as I have shown in the Excursus, there never was such a person as John the Presbyter in contradistinction from John the Apostle. The two were one.[2]

We see, then, that, taken in connexion with the internal evidence, there is sufficient ground for accepting these little Epistles. There is no difficulty in the fact that St. John should call himself "the Elder" and not "the Apostle." The dispute as to who was and who was not to be regarded as an Apostle had long since died away. St. Paul himself does not always care to use the title. He drops it, for instance, in addressing those who, like the Philippians and Philemon, had never disputed his apostolic authority. The other Apostles were all dead. The whole Church knew that St. John was the last survivor of the Twelve. He may have called himself "the Elder" out of humility; just as Peter, in addressing the elders, calls himself their "fellow-elder."[3] Or he may have used the designation because he belonged to that class of aged Christians to whom, at this time, the younger generation which was springing up around them often appealed under the name of "the Elders.[4] Or,

seven, and some only three—one of James, one of Peter, and one of John—but some say the three (of John)."

[1] Dodwell, Beck, Fritzsche, Ebrard, &c. The latter says (1) that all resemblances to the First Epistle vanish if 2 John 5—6, 7, and 3 John 11 are regarded as quotations; and (2) that it is inconceivable that the *authority* of an *Apostle* should have been disputed in such a way as is described in 3 John 9.

[2] See Excursus XIV., "John the Apostle and John the Presbyter."

[3] 1 Pet. v. 1, *συμπρεσβύτερος*; Philem. 9, *ὁ πρεσβύτης*.

[4] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 39. The word occurs in Irenæus and other Johannine writers in quotations from the Fathers of that earlier age.

again, he may have called himself "the Elder" because he desired to claim no higher authority than that which accrued to him from his great age and long experience.[1] And it must be observed that he calls himself "the Elder," not "an Elder." There were hundreds of elders, and, therefore, by calling himself "the Elder" in a pre-eminent and peculiar sense, he at once marks his age and authority. The phraseology, the style, the tone of thought, the method of treatment in every sentence, points directly to the authorship of the Apostle. The few trivial deviations from his ordinary expressions only show that we are not dealing with the work of an elaborate imitator.[2]

1. There has always been great doubt as to the destination of the Second Epistle of St. John. Even yet the question whether it was addressed to a lady or to a Church cannot be regarded as settled. It begins with the words, "the Elder unto the Elect Lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not only I, but also all who have learnt to know the truth."[3] Certainly

[1] It is in exact accordance with his modest self-withdrawal. In the Gospel he entirely suppresses his own name, as in the First Epistle. In the Apocalypse he only calls himself "John." So far, therefore, the absence of any lofty title, such as a forger might have given him, is a mark of genuineness. There is nothing to support Ewald's notion that it was due to the dangers of the time.

[2] Such are *εἴ τις* for *ἐάν τις* (2 John 10), *διδαχὴν φέρειν, περιπατεῖν κατά, κοινωνεῖν, μείζοτέραν*, as pointed out by De Wette. To dwell on the occurrence of a few phrases which he had no occasion to use elsewhere (such as *ὑγιαίνειν, φιλοπρωτεύων, φλυαρεῖν, προπέμπειν ἀξίως τοῦ Θεοῦ*), is idle.

[3] 2 John 8; *Ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς, οὓς ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, κ.τ.λ.* The possible renderings are (in order of their possibility)—

1. To an elect lady.
2. To the elect lady.
3. To the elect Kyria.
4. To the lady Electa.

the *primâ facie* impression created by the words would be that they refer to a lady. In that case the omission of the article seems to show that her name is not mentioned. For if either Electa or Kyria had been her name, then, just as we have "To Gaius, the beloved," in the address of the Third Epistle, we should naturally have expected here, "To Electa, the lady," or "To Kyria, the elect." Nor is this objection adequately answered by saying that if Kyria was the lady's name, the article might have been omitted by an unconscious analogy of the use of the word Kurios, "the Lord," without an article.

α. That her name was Electa[1] is asserted in the Latin translation of the fragments of Clemens of Alexandria, where he says, "The Second Epistle of John, which was written to virgins, is very simple; it was, however, written to a Babylonian lady, by name Electa." It may, however, be regarded as certain that this is a mistake. For although Electa may have been a proper name in the Christian Church, yet in that case the meaning of verse 13 must be, "The children of thy sister Electa greet thee;" and it is highly improbable that *both* sisters bore this very unusual name.

β. But may it be addressed to a lady named Kyria?[2] Kyria was a female name, for it is found in one of the inscriptions recorded in Gruter;[3] and from an expression of Athanasius, "he is writing to Kyria and her children," it has been inferred that this was his view. It is a possible view in itself; and since Kyria may

[1] This is the view of Lyra, Grotius, Wetstein.

[2] This is the view of Bengel, Heumann, Lücke, De Wette, and Düsterdieck.

[3] Gruter, *Inscript.* p. 1127, "Phenippus and his wife Kyria."

be the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Martha, the lady may have been a Jewess. This view also gets over the difficulty of a *title* so lofty as Kyria, which, according to Bengel, was rarely used even to Queens.[1] But the objection still remains that we should then have expected, not "To elect Kyria," but "To Kyria the elect;" just as in the next Epistle we do not find "To beloved Gaius," but "To Gaius, the beloved."

γ. But if we must render the words, "To an elect Lady," are we to understand by them a person or a Church?

In either case, the person or the Church is left unnamed. The modern view seems to incline in favour of a Church.[2] All sorts of conjectures have been made as to the Church intended, and the most far-fetched and arbitrary reasons have been assigned for supposing that it was addressed to the Church of Corinth,[3] or of Philadelphia,[4] or of Jerusalem,[5] or of Patmos, or of Ephesus, or of Babylon.[6]

2. The latter is the view of Bishop Wordsworth. Starting from the ambiguous expression of 1 Pet. v. 13, "the co-elect (ἡ συνεκλεκτή) with you that is at Babylon saluteth you," and interpreting it to mean

[1] See, however, the following note.

[2] So Hofmann, Hilgenfeld, Huther, Ewald, Wordsworth. On the other hand, Bengel, Fritzsche, De Wette, Lange, Heumann, Alford, Düsterdieck, understand a person to be addressed. Epictetus says that "women from the age of fourteen are called 'ladies' (κύριαι) by men."

[3] Serrarius. [4] Whiston.

[5] Whitby and Augusti.

[6] The notion of St. Jerome (*Ep.* xi. *ad Ageruchiam*) that it was addressed to the Church in general (though adopted by Hilgenfeld), may be at once dismissed. Quoting Cant. vi. 9 as referring to the Church, he adds, "to which John writes his Epistle, 'St. John to an Elect Lady.'" The opinion that the Lady is *a* Church is mentioned by Œcumenius, Theophylact, and Cassiodorus, as well as by an ancient scholion.

the Church in Babylon, he says that it is a greeting of the Babylonian Church sent through St. Peter to the Churches of Asia; and he supposes that the verse, "the children of thy sister, the elect one, greet thee," is a return salutation of the Churches of Asia, through St. John, to the Church of Babylon. He thinks that this is rendered more probable by the close relations between St. Peter and St. John; and he finds a confirmation of it in the remark of Clemens of Alexandria, that the letter is addressed "to a Babylonian lady," and in the curious incidental expression in the title of St. Augustine's tractate on the Epistle, "Tractatus in Epistolam Johannis *ad Parthos*." At this time, he says, Babylon was under the rule of the Parthians, and, therefore, a letter to the Babylonian Church might have been called "a letter to the Parthians." Further, when Clemens says that the letter was written "to Virgins," he thinks that the Greek word "*parthenous*" was only a corruption of "*Parthous*." Lastly, he adds that "there would be a peculiar interest and beauty in such an address as this from St. John to a Church at Babylon, which, in the days of her heathen pride, had been called 'the Lady of Kingdoms,' and had said, 'I shall be a Lady for ever.'"[1] Babylon had fallen; but St. Peter had preached to Parthians, among others, on the Day of Pentecost,[2] and so Babylon had arisen again in Christ, and become an elect Lady in Him, and could be addressed as such by the Apostolic brother of St. Peter, the beloved disciple St. John.

(i.) I must confess that to me the whole theory looks like an inverted pyramid of inference tottering about

[1] Is. xlvii. 5, 7; גְּבֶרֶת *gevereth*, rendered Κυρία by the LXX., as in Gen. xvi. 4, &c. [2] Acts ii. 9.

upon its extremely narrow apex. The phrase of St. Peter is of *most* uncertain interpretation. It is not certain that by "the Co-elect" he means a Church. It is still more uncertain that by Babylon he means Babylon and not Rome. We may say of the very basis on which the theory rests,—

"Nil agit exemplum quod litem lite resolvit."

(ii.) Then the theory seems to imply the supposition that St. John had at some time left Asia and travelled as far as Babylon—a journey intrinsically improbable, and which has left no trace in any tradition of the Apostle. In ecclesiastical legends it is St. Thomas and not St. John who is said to have been the Apostle of the Parthians.

(iii.) Next, the vague tradition that the Epistle was addressed to the Parthians is devoid of even the slightest value, for it is more than doubtful whether the words "*ad Parthos*" ever stood in the original editions of St. Augustine's *Tractates;* and when Bede says that it was the opinion of St. Athanasius that the *First* Epistle was addressed "to the Parthians,"[1] he is almost certainly mistaken. No such statement is found in any Greek Father. It is only found, according to Griesbach, in some late and unimportant Latin Fathers, and in the passage of St. Augustine.[2] Now nothing can be more improbable than that the First Epistle was addressed to the Parthians,[3] and we should require

[1] Bede, *Prol. ad Ep. Cathol.* (Cave, *Hist. Litt.* i. 289).

[2] Aug. *Quaest. Evang.* ii. 39. "Secundum sententiam hanc etiam illud est quod dictum est a Joanne (1 John iii. 2) *in epistola ad Parthos.*" He is followed by the Spaniard, Idacius Clarus. Πρὸς Πάρθους is found in superscriptions of the Second Epistle in some late cursive manuscripts.

[3] Grotius, Hammond, and others accepted this view; and Paulus pressed it into his theories about the Epistle.

much stronger evidence than this isolated allusion of St. Augustine to establish the fact. We are driven to suppose that "ad Parthos" must be a misreading. Serrarius conjectures that it should be "*ad Pathmios*," to the people of Patmos, but these and many other conjectural emendations have nothing to support them.[1] On the other hand, the word *Parthos* may have arisen from some confusion with *Parthenous*,[2] and not, as Bishop Wordsworth supposes, the latter from the former. The sweet and lofty simplicity of the First Epistle may have led someone to suggest that it was written to Virgins—using the word in the sense in which it occurs in the Rev. xiv. 4—namely, to youthful and uncorrupted Christians. And this suggestion may have derived fresh force from the ancient belief that St. John himself was in this sense "a Virgin" (*parthenos*),[3] a title which is actually given to him in some superscriptions of the Apocalypse, and elsewhere.[4]

3. But if Bishop Wordsworth's suggestion comes to nothing, what are we to say of the theories of German critics? The remarks of Baur respecting this Epistle exhibit, almost in their culmination, the arbitrary

[1] Semler guesses "*adapertius*;" Paulus "*ad Pantas*;" and Wegscheider πρὸς τοὺς διεσπαρμένους, *ad Sparsos!* (see Tholuck, *Introd.* p. 32, et seq.).

[2] So Whiston conjectures. For Clemens Alexandrinus, in his *Adumbrationes*, says (in a very confused passage) that the *Second* Epistle was written "to Virgins," which is manifestly erroneous. His words are—"Secunda Joannis epistola quae *ad Virgines* scripta est, simplicissima est;" then after saying that it is written to a certain Babylonian lady named Electa, he adds, "it signifies, however, the election of the Holy Church."

[3] Gieseler, *Kirchengesch.* i. p. 139.

[4] Tert. *de Monogam.* c. 17; Ps.-Ignat. *ad Philad.* 4; Clem. Alex. *Orat. de Maria. Virg.* p. 380. In a cursive manuscript of the twelfth century (30) the superscription of the Apocalypse runs thus—"Of the holy, most glorious apostle and evangelist, the Virgin, the beloved, the bosom Apostle (ἐπιστηθίου) John, the Theologian."

recklessness of conjecture which has defaced the usefulness and obliterated the existence of the school of Tübingen. His combinations are briefly these:—Electa is a Church; she is called a Babylonian by St. Clemens to indicate the Church of Rome; the Epistle expresses the views of the Montanists; Diotrephes, the leader of the anti-Montanist section of the Church, had refused to hold communion with them; by Diotrephes is meant, not "Victor," as Schwegler (by a demonstrable anachronism[1]) supposed, but perhaps Anicetus, Soter, or Eleutheros. The writer is so strong a partisan as to describe the faction of Diotrephes as "heathens"[2] (3 John, 7)!

4. Not much more reasonable is the notion of Hilgenfeld that the Second Epistle was sent to a Church as a letter of excommunication against Gnostic teachers, and the Third as a letter of commendation (ἐπιστολὴ συστατικὴ) to Gaius, issued to vindicate against Judaising Christians the right of St. John as well as of St. James to furnish such authorisations to travelling missionaries.

5. Nor less arbitrary is the suggestion of Ewald that both the Second and Third Epistles were addressed to one Church; that it must have been an important Church, because three of its Elders—Diotrephes, Demetrius, and Gaius—are mentioned; that the name of the Church is omitted because it would have been dangerous to mention it; and that the Third Epistle was addressed to Gaius from a misgiving that Diotrephes might suppress the first letter, and prevent it from being publicly read in the Church.

[1] For this Epistle is quoted long before Victor's day by Irenæus and Clemens of Alexandria. [2] Baur, *Montanismus*.

Such theories are not worth refuting. They might be constructed in any numbers. They are mere ropes of sand, which fall to pieces at a touch. It can only be regarded as a misfortune that such multitudes of them should cumber, with their useless accumulations, the whole field of exegesis. They do but block up the way to any real advance in our knowledge of the history of the early Church. I would say of them what Baur says of certain theories of apologists: "It is not worth while to discuss vague hypotheses which have no support in history and no cohesion in themselves."[1]

While I do not deny that the Elect Lady addressed *may* have been a Church, it does not seem to me probable. To say that the Church is symbolised as a woman and a bride in the Apocalypse, is to adduce an argument which bears very little on the matter.[2] The question is not whether a Church *might* not be allegorically called "a Lady," which every one admits, but whether it is natural that, in a short and simple letter, St. John should, from first to last, keep up, in this one particular, an elaborate allegory, and, unlike the other Apostles, address a Church as if he were writing to a lady. If the letter were playful or mystic, such a supposition might be tolerable. As it is, unless there be some unknown factors in the history of the circumstances which called forth the letter, it would seem to savour of a euphuism unworthy of the great Apostle, and alien from Apostolic simplicity. So far as I am aware, there is not another instance in

[1] Baur, *Ch. Hist.* i. 131.

[2] Rev. xii. 1—17; xxi. 9. To say that Ἐκλεκτὴ means "a Church" in Cant. vi. 8, τὶς αὕτη ἐκλεκτὴ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, is to pass off exegetical fancies as settled truths.

Christian literature, whether Greek or Latin, whether in apostolic or post-apostolic times, in which a Church is called Kyria, or addressed throughout as a lady.

6. I take the letter, then, in its natural sense, as having been addressed to a Christian lady and her children. Some of those children the Apostle seems to have met in one of his visits of supervision to the Churches of Asia. They may have been on a visit to some of their cousins in a neighbouring city, and St. John—always attracted by sympathy towards the young—finding that they were living as faithful Christian lives, writes news of them to their mother, whom he held in high esteem; and in writing seizes the opportunity to add some words of Christian teaching. That St. John should write to a Christian lady has in it nothing extraordinary. Women like Priscilla, Lydia, and Phœbe played no small part in the early spread of Christian truth. They represented that ennoblement of Christian womanhood which was one of the great results of Christian preaching; and they inspired the Apostles with a warm sentiment of affection and esteem.[1] That the lady should be left unnamed is in accordance with the feelings of the day. It was against the common feelings both of Jews and Greeks that virtuous matrons should be thrust into needless prominence. St. Paul indeed names them when occasion demands. In writing to the Philippians, among whom women occupied a more recognised position than among other Roman communities, he makes a personal appeal to the two ladies Euodias and Syntyche;[2] and he sends salutations to

[1] See Acts xvi. 14; xviii. 2, &c.; and St. Paul's salutation to nine Christian women, in Rom. xvi.

[2] Phil. iv. 2.

and from women among others. Yet he never wrote a letter, so far as we know, even to Lydia or to Priscilla, to whom he was so much indebted; and if he had written such a letter—intended (as this letter of St. John's may well have been) for perusal by all the members of the Church, and even meant to be read aloud to them in their congregation—it is probable that he would have left the name unmentioned. Much more would this have been the natural feeling of St. John, who had lived most of his life in Jerusalem. He would have been less inclined to infringe on the seclusion which was the ordinary position of Eastern womanhood, because his experiences had been less cosmopolitan than those of his brother Apostles. Who the Elect Lady was we do not know, and never shall know. To suggest, as some have done, that she may have been Martha the sister of Lazarus,[1] or the Mother of our Lord,[2] is to be guilty of the idle and reprehensible practice of suggesting theories which rest on the air, and are not even worth the trouble of a serious refutation.

Nor is there anything to indicate where these letters were written. They may have been sent from either Patmos or Ephesus. Eusebius says that they were written at Ephesus before a tour of pastoral visitation.[3]

The analysis of the letter is extremely simple. After a kindly greeting (1—3), he tell this Christian matron of his joy in finding that some of her children (whom he had chanced to encounter) were walking in the truth (4). He enforces on her the commandment

[1] Carpzov. Martha=Κυρία.
[2] Knauer, *Stud. u. Krit.* 1833.
[3] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 23.

of Christian love, which is both new and old (5, 6); warns her against dangerous antichristian teachers (7—9), to whose errors she is not to lend the sanction of her hospitality or countenance (10, 11), and concludes with the expression of a hope that he may soon visit her and her family, and with a greeting from the children of her Christian sister (12, 13). The keynotes of the Epistle, as indicated by its most prominent words, are Truth and Love. Truth occurs five times and Love four times in these few verses.

"The Elder to the elect Lady[1] and her children whom I love in Truth,[2] and not I alone, but also all who have learnt to know the Truth,[3] because of the Truth which abideth in us, and shall be with us for ever.[4] Grace, mercy, peace,[5] shall be with us[6] from God our Father, and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, in Truth and Love.

"I rejoice[7] greatly because I have found some of thy children[8] walking in Truth, even as we received commandment from the Father.

[1] Comp. ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις, 1 Pet. i. 1.

[2] Truth is here used in the Johannine sense—the realm of eternal reality. "Whom I love in the truth of the Gospel."

[3] It has been thought that this expression is too wide to apply to a single person, but it merely means that all Christians who know the character of the lady and her children love her.

[4] Comp. John xiv. 16, 17.

[5] "Votum cum affirmatione" (Bengel). A wish, with the assurance that it will be fulfilled.

[6] For the full meaning of this triple greeting see my *Life and Work of St. Paul*, ii. 516. "Grace" refers to man's sin; "mercy" to his misery; "peace" is the total result to both; and all three work in the region of truth and love. "*Gratia* tollit culpam *misericordia* miseriam, *pax* dicit permansionem in gratia ex misericordia" (Bengel).

[7] Lit. "I rejoiced," but it is the epistolary aorist. "Avete, filii et filiae, in nomine Domini nostri Christi in pace; supra modum exhilaror beatis et praeclaris spiritibus vestris" (Ps.-Barnab. *Ep.* i.).

[8] λίαν, 3 John 3. This does not of course *necessarily* imply that some were *not* so walking. Probably St. John had only met some of them.

"And now[1] I entreat thee, Lady, not as writing to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning,[2] that we love one another. And this is love, that we should walk according to His commandments.[3] This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it. Because many deceivers went forth[4] into the world, such as confess not Jesus Christ coming in the flesh.[5] This is the deceiver and the Antichrist. Take heed to yourselves that ye lose not what we have wrought,[6] but that ye receive a full reward. Every one who goeth forward[7] and abideth not in the teaching of the Christ, hath not God. He who abideth in the teaching, he hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh to you,[8] and bringeth not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, and bid him not 'good speed.' For he who biddeth him 'good speed' partakes in his evil deeds.[9]

"Having many things to write to you, I prefer[10] not to do so by

[1] The words mark a transition, as in 1 John ii. 28, *ἐρωτῶ*. See on 1 John v. 16. "Blandior quaedam admonendi ratio" (Schlichting).

[2] See on 1 John ii. 7, 8; iii. 11.

[3] The same identification of love with obedience which we have found in 1 John ii. 6—10, &c. *Praxis*, not *gnosis*, is the true test of faithful discipleship.

[4] *ἐξῆλθον*, ℵ, A, B, Syriac, Vulgate, Irenæus. Not "came in," the reading adopted by our E. V. Comp. 1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 1—3.

[5] The *present* participle is used to make the expression as general as possible. They denied the possibility of the Incarnation. See 1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 2; v. 6. They seem to have been Docetic Gnostics.

[6] The readings vary greatly between the first and second persons. Matt. ix. 37; 2 Tim. ii. 15; John vi. 29. The *loss* which takes off from the full reward is explained, in the next verse, to be separation from God.

[7] The true reading is not "who transgresseth" (*παραβαίνων*), but *προάγων*, ℵ, A, B, Vulg. Not, as some commentators here hint, as though all progress in Christian thought was a crime, and incapacity to advance beyond stereotyped prejudice a virtue, but referring either (1) to advance in *wrong directions*, or (2) to Christian teachers who go before their flocks (John x. 4; Mark x. 32).

[8] The *indicative* following *εἰ*, implies that such *will* come. He is not of course thinking of heathens, but of Christian false prophets.

[9] See below. The meaning of course is that we are not to give to fundamental heresy an appearance of approval by pronouncing the deeper fraternal greeting. In some versions are here interpolated the words, "Ecce praedixi vobis ne in diem domini condemnemini."

[10] Epistolary aorist.

paper and ink,[1] but I hope to come to you,[2] and to speak mouth to mouth,[3] that your joy may be fulfilled.[4] The children of thy elect sister greet thee."[5]

It will be seen, then, at a glance, that Truth and Love are keynotes of the Epistle, and that the conceptions which prevail throughout it are those with which we have been made familiar by the previous Epistle. And yet one passage of the Epistle has again and again been belauded, and is again and again adduced as a stronghold of intolerance, an excuse for pitiless hostility against all who differ from ourselves.[6] There is something distressing in the swift instinct with which an unchristian egotism has first assumed its own infallibility on subjects which are often no part of Christian faith, and then has sped as on vulture's wings to this passage as a consecration of the feelings with which the *odium theologicum* disgraces and ruins the Divinest interests of the cause of Christ. It must be said—though I say it with the deepest sorrow—that

[1] If the letter was written at Patmos, these materials might not readily be procurable. The word *χάρτης*, means Egyptian papyrus. For the manner in which it was prepared, see Pliny, *H. N.* xiii. 21. The ink was made of soot and water, mixed with gum.

[2] *γενέσθαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς.* The same Greek construction as in John vi. 25.

[3] A Hebraism, פֶּה אֶל־פֶּה (Jer. xxxii. 4; 3 John 14).

[4] 1 John i. 4.

[5] "Suavissima communitas! comitas Apostoli minorum verbis salutem nunciantis" (Bengel). It is impossible to say why the sister herself sends no greetings. We can hardly suppose that she was dead, because she is called "thy *elect* sister." But we may suggest a score of hypotheses which would suffice to explain the circumstance. Bengel says, "Hos liberos (ver. 4) in domo materterae eorum invenerat."

[6] Thus on the strength of this text John à Lasco, having been expelled from England during the reign of Mary in 1553, was, with his congregation, refused admission into Denmark (Salig. *Hist. Conf. Aug.* ii. 1090; quoted by Braune *ad loc.* in Lange's *Bibelwerk*). Thus by the manipulation of a few phrases Hate is made to wear the guise of Love, and Fury to pose as Christian meekness.

the cold exclusiveness of the Pharisee, the bitter ignorance of the self-styled theologian, the usurped infallibility of the half-educated religionist, have ever been the curse of Christianity. They have imposed "the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men on the general words of God," and have tried to enforce them on all men's consciences with all kinds of burnings and anathemas, under equal threats of death and damnation.[1] And thus they have incurred the terrible responsibility of presenting religion to mankind in a false and repellent guise. Is theological hatred still to be a proverb for the world's just contempt? Is such hatred—hatred in its bitterest and most ruthless form—to be regarded as the legitimate and normal outcome of the religion of love? Is the spirit of peace never to be brought to bear on religious opinions? Are such questions always to excite the most intense animosities and the most terrible divisions? Is the Diotrephes of each little religious clique to be the ideal of a Christian character? Is it in religious discussions alone that impartiality is to be set down as weakness, and courtesy as treason? Is it among those only who pride themselves on being "orthodox" that there is to be the completest absence of humility and of justice? Is the world to be for ever confirmed in its opinion that theological partisans are less truthful, less candid, less high-minded, less honourable even than the partisans of political and social causes who make no profession as to the duty of love? Are the so-called "religious" champions to be for ever, as they now are, in many instances, the most unscrupulously bitter and the most conspicuously unfair? Alas!

[1] Chillingworth.

they might be so with far less danger to the cause of religion if they would forego the luxury of "quoting Scripture for their purpose." The harm which has thus been done is incredible :—

> "Crime was ne'er so black
> As ghostly cheer and pious thanks to lack.
> Satan is modest. At Heaven's door he lays
> His evil offspring, and in Scriptural phrase
> And saintly posture gives to God the praise
> And honour of his monstrous progeny."

If this passage of St. John had indeed authorised such errors and excesses—if it had indeed been a proof, as has been said, of "the deplorable growth of dogmatic intolerance"[1]—it would have been hard to separate it from the old spirit of rigorism and passion which led the Apostle, in his most undeveloped days, to incur his Lord's rebuke, by proclaiming his jealousy of those who worked on different lines from his own, and by wishing to call down fire to consume the rude villagers of Samaria. It would have required some ingenuity not to see in it the same sort of impatient and unworthy intolerance which once marked his impetuous outbursts, but which is (I trust falsely) attributed to him in the silly story of Cerinthus and the bath. In that case also the spirit of his advice would have been widely different from the spirit which actuated the merciful tolerance of the Lord to Heathens, to Samaritans, to Sadducees, and even to Pharisees. It would have been in direct antagonism to our Lord's command to the Twelve to salute with their blessing every house to which they came, because

[1] So Renan, in his article on the Fourth Gospel in the *Contemp. Rev.* Sept. 1877.

if it were not worthy their peace would return to them again.[1] It would have been alien from many of the noblest lessons of the New Testament. It would practically have excluded from the bosom of Christianity, and of Christianity alone, the highest workings of the universal law of love. It would have been in glaring disaccord with the gentleness and moderation which is now shown, even towards absolute unbelievers, by the wisest, gentlest, and most Christlike of God's saints. If it really bore the sense which has been assigned to it, it would be a grave reason for sharing the ancient doubts respecting the genuineness of the little letter in which it occurs, and for coming to the conclusion that, while its general sentiments were borrowed from the authentic works of St. John, they had only been thrown together for the purpose of introducing, under the sanction of his name, a precept of unchristian harshness and religious intolerance.

But there is too much reason to fear that to the end of time the conceit of orthodoxism will claim in-

[1] It is said that Polycarp was once accosted by Marcion, and asked by him, "Dost thou not know me?" "Yes," he answered, "I know thee, the firstborn of Satan" (Iren. *c. Haer.* iii. 3; Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 14). "So cautious," adds Irenæus, "were the Apostles and their followers to have no communication—no, not so much as in discourse—with those who adulterated the truth." The story, as might have been expected, is told by other ecclesiastical writers with intense gusto, down to modern days. But even if it be true, it by no means follows that the example was estimable. St. Polycarp was just as liable to sin and error as other saints have been. We have no right to treat any man with rude discourtesy. If to be a Christian is to act as Christ acted, then Polycarp's discourtesy was unchristian. Pharisees openly rejected our Lord, yet He even accepted their invitations, and told His Disciples to show them honour. Is a heretic so much worse than a heathen, that a Christian wife might live with a heathen husband (1 Cor. vii. 12, 13), while yet a Christian might not even speak without the grossest rudeness to a Gnostic teacher?

spired authority for its own conclusions, even when they are most antichristian, and will build up systems of exclusive hatred out of inferences purely unwarrantable. It is certain, too, that each sect is always tempted to be proudest of its most sectarian peculiarities; that each form of dissent, whether in or out of the body of the Established Churches, most idolises its own dissidence. The aim of religious opinionativeness always has been, and always will be, to regard its narrowest conclusions as matters of faith, and to exclude or excommunicate all those who reject or modify them. The sort of syllogisms used by these enemies of the love of Christ are much as follows:—

"*My* opinions are founded on interpretations of Scripture. Scripture is infallible. *My* views of its meaning are infallible too. *Your* opinions and inferences differ from mine, therefore you *must* be in the wrong. All wrong opinions are capable of so many ramifications that any one who differs from me in minor points must be unsound in vital matters also. Therefore, all who differ from me and my clique are 'heretics.' All heresy is wicked. All heretics are necessarily wicked men. It is my religious duty to hate, calumniate, and abuse you."

Those who have gone thus far in elevating Hatred into a Christian virtue ought logically to go a little farther. They generally do so when they have the power. They do not openly say, "Let us venerate the examples of Arnold of Citeaux, and of Torquemada. Let us glorify the Crusaders at Beziers. Let us revive the racks and thumbscrews of the Inquisition. Let us, with the Pope, strike medals in honour of the massacre of St. Bartholmew. Let us re-establish the Star Chamber,

and entrust those ecclesiastics who hold our opinions with powers of torture." But, since they are robbed of these means of securing unanimity—since they can no longer even imprison "dissenting tinkers" like Bunyan and "regicide Arians" like Milton—they are too apt to indulge in the party spirit which can employ slander though it is robbed of the thumbscrew, and revel in depreciation though it may no longer avail itself of the fagot and the rack.

The tender mercies of contending religionists are exceptionally cruel. The men who, in the Corinthian party-sense, boast "I am of Christ," do not often, in these days, formulate the defence of their lack of charity so clearly as this. But they continually act and write in this spirit. Long experience has made mankind familiar with the base ingenuity which frames charges of constructive heresy out of the most innocent opinions; which insinuates that variations from the vulgar exegesis furnish a sufficient excuse for banding anathemas, under the plea that they are an implicit denial of Christ! Had there been in Scripture any sanction for this execrable spirit of heresy-hunting Pharisaism, Christian theology would only become another name for the collisions of wrangling sects, all cordially hating each other, and only kept together by common repulsion against external enmity. But, to me at least, it seems that the world has never developed a more unchristian and antichristian phenomenon than the conduct of those who encourage the bitterest excesses of hatred under the profession of Christian love.[1] I know nothing so profoundly irreligious as the narrow intolerance of an ignorant dogmatism. Had there been anything

[1] 1 John iii. 10, 11.

in this passage which sanctioned so odious a spirit, I could not have believed that it emanated from St. John. A good tree does not bring forth corrupt fruit. The sweet fountain of Christianity cannot send forth the salt and bitter water of fierceness and hate. The Apostle of love would have belied all that is best in his own teaching if he had consciously given an absolution, nay, an incentive, to furious intolerance. The last words of Christian revelation could never have meant what these words have been interpreted to mean—namely, "Hate, exclude, anathematise, persecute, treat as enemies and opponents to be crushed and insulted, those who differ from you in religious opinions." Those who have pretended a Scriptural sanction for such Cain-like religionism have generally put their theories into practice against men who have been infinitely more in the right, and transcendently nearer God, than those who, in killing or injuring them, ignorantly thought that they were doing God service.

Meanwhile this incidental expression of St. John's brief letter will not lend itself to these gross perversions. What St. John *really says*, and *really means*, is something wholly different. False teachers were rife, who, professing to be Christians, robbed the nature of Christ of all which gave its efficacy to the Atonement, and its significance to the Incarnation. These teachers like other Christian missionaries, travelled from city to city, and, in the absence of public inns, were received into the houses of Christian converts. The Christian lady to whom St. John writes is warned that, if she offers her hospitality to these dangerous emissaries who were subverting the central truth of Christianity, she is expressing a public sanction of them; and, by doing

this and offering them her best wishes, she is taking a direct share in the harm they do. This is common sense; nor is there anything uncharitable in it. No one is bound to help forward the dissemination of teaching what he regards as erroneous respecting the most essential doctrines of his own faith. Still less would it have been right to do this in the days when Christian communities were so small and weak. But to interpret this as it has in all ages been practically interpreted—to pervert it into a sort of command to exaggerate the minor variations between religious opinions, and to persecute those whose views differ from our own—to make our own opinion the exclusive test of heresy, and to say, with Cornelius à Lapide, that this verse reprobates "all conversation, all intercourse, all dealings with heretics"—is to interpret Scripture by the glare of partisanship and spiritual self-satisfaction, not to read it under the light of holy love.

Alas! churchmen and theologians have found it a far more easy and agreeable matter to obey their distortion of this supposed command, and even to push its stringency to the very farthest limits, than to obey the command that we should love one another! From the Tree of delusive knowledge they pluck the poisonous and inflating fruits of pride and hatred, while they suffer the fruits of love and meekness to fall neglected from the Tree of Life. The popularity which these verses still enjoy, and the exaggerated misinterpretations still attached to them, are due to the fact that they are so acceptable to the arrogance and selfishness, the dishonesty and tyranny, the sloth and obstinacy, of that bitter spirit of religious discord which has been the disgrace of the Church and the scandal of the world.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

"Ex operibus cognoscitur valetudo animae, et hanc prosequuntur vota Sanctorum."—BENGEL.

NOTHING can be ascertained respecting the Gaius to whom this letter is addressed, beyond what the letter itself implies—that he was a faithful and kind-hearted Christian. I have already explained that, from the circumstances of the time, hospitality to Christian teachers was a necessary duty, without which the preaching of Christianity could hardly have been carried on.[1] Gaius, like his namesake at Corinth,[2] and like Philemon,[3] distinguished himself by the cheerfulness with which he performed this duty. It could not always have been an easy or an agreeable duty, for some of the Christian emissaries, and especially those from Jerusalem, seem, according to the testimony of St. Paul, to have behaved with an insolence and rapacity truly outrageous.[4] But those to whom Gaius opened his hospitable house were not of this character. They were men who had followed the noble initiative of St. Paul, and who refused to receive anything from the Gentiles to whom they preached.

Some, from the identity of name and character, have

[1] Hence the importance attached to it (Rom. xii. 13; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 8; Heb. xiii. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 9).

[2] Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. i. 14.

[3] Philem. 7.

[4] 2 Cor. xi. 20.

assumed that the Gaius here addressed must have been the Gaius of Corinth. Such an inference is most precarious. Gaius was, perhaps, the commonest of all names current throughout the Roman Empire. So common was it that it was selected in the Roman law-books to serve the familiar purpose of John Doe and Richard Roe in our own legal formularies. It no more serves to identify the bearer of the name than if it had been addressed "To the well-beloved ——," for Gaius was colloquially used for "so-and-so."[1] There are at least three Gaiuses in the New Testament—Gaius of Macedonia (Acts xix. 29), Gaius of Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23), and Gaius of Derbe (Acts xx. 4). A Gaius is mentioned in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (vii. 40), as Bishop of Pergamum, and it is not impossible that this may be the person here addressed.

The main object of the letter was to encourage him in his course of Christian faithfulness, and to contrast his conduct with that of the domineering Diotrephes. Diotrephes, in his ambition, his arbitrariness, his arrogance, his tendency to the idle babble of controversy, and his fondness for excommunicating his opponents, furnishes us with a very ancient specimen of a character extremely familiar in the annals of ecclesiasticism.[2] There is something astonishing in the notion that the prominent Christian Presbyter of an Asiatic Church should not only repudiate the authority of St. John, and not only refuse to receive his travelling missionary, and to prevent others from doing so, but should even excommunicate or try to excommunicate those who did so!

[1] Renan, in *Contemp. Rev.* Sept. 1877.

[2] Hymenaeus, Alexander (1 Tim. i. 20), Philetus (2 Tim. ii. 17), Hermogenes, and Phygellus (2 Tim. i. 18) are similarly mentioned as opponents of St. Paul.

But we must leave the difficulty where it is, since we are unable to throw any light upon it. The condition of the Church of Corinth, as St. Paul described it, leaves us prepared for the existence of almost any irregularities. The history of the Church of Christ, from the earliest down to the latest days, teems with subjects for perplexity and surprise.

"The Elder to Gaius the beloved, whom I love in Truth.[1]

"Beloved, I pray that in all respects[2] thou mayest prosper,[3] and be in health,[4] even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoice exceedingly at the arrival of brethren who bear witness to thy Truth, even as thou walkest in Truth. I have no greater[5] joy than this, that I hear of my children walking in the Truth.[6]

"Beloved, thou playest a faithful part in all thy work towards the brethren, and even to strangers,[7] who bear witness to thy love before the Church, whom by forwarding on their journey[8] worthily of God[9] thou wilt do well. For on the Name's behalf[10] they went forth,

[1] 1 John iii. 18; 2 John i. To love "in Truth," is the same as to love "in the Lord."

[2] Not "above all things," as in E. V. That meaning of *περὶ πάντων* is only found in classical poetry.

[3] *εὐοδοῦσθαι* (Rom. i. 10; 1 Cor. xii. 2); literally, to be "guided on a journey." Philo uses the word as here, both of body and soul, *Quis Rer. Div. Haer.* § 58.

[4] *ὑγιαίνειν* was not among Christians as it was among Stoics, a common form of address. Hence we must assume that Gaius suffered from ill-health.

[5] The doubled comparative *μειζοτέραν* may be intentionally emphatic like *ἐλαχιστότερος*, in Eph. iii. 8, "Est ad intendendam significationem comparativus e comparativo factus" (Grotius).

[6] *ἵνα*. St. John's use of *ἵνα* is far wider than that of classical writers. It often loses its *telic* sense ("in order that"), and becomes simply *ekbatic*, or explanatory, as in Luke i. 43, John xv. 13.

[7] *καὶ τοῦτο*, ℵ, A, B, C. The hospitality of Gaius was not only *φιλαδελφία*, but *φιλοξενία*.

[8] *προπέμψας*. Tit. iii. 13.

[9] *ἀξίως τοῦ Θεοῦ*. That is, giving them the *maximum* of help, as their sacred cause deserves. (Comp. 1 Thess. ii. 12; Col. i. 10.)

[10] Acts v. 41; ix. 16, &c.; Phil. ii. 9. "I have been bound in the Name" (Ignat. *ad Ephes.* 3). "Some are wont with evil guile to carry

accepting nothing from the Gentiles.[1] *We* then ought to support such, that we may become fellow-workers with the Truth.[2]

"I wrote somewhat to the Church,[3] but their domineering Diotrephes receiveth us not.[4] On this account, if I come, I will bring to mind[5] his deeds which he doeth, with wicked words battling against us;[6] and not content with that, he neither himself receives the brethren, and he hinders those who wish to do so, and expels them from the Church.[7]

"Beloved, do not imitate the evil but the good.[8] He that doeth good is from God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God.[9] Witness

about *the Name*, while they are doing deeds unworthy of God" (*id. ib.* 7). Similarly Christians, among themselves, spoke of Christianity as "the way" (Acts ix. 2; xix. 9).

[1] St. Paul's rule (1 Thess. ii. 9; 1 Cor. ix. 18; 2 Cor. xi. 7; xii. 16). Gentiles must of course mean, "Gentile converts." They could not expect the heathens to support them. This is perhaps implied by the adjective ἐθνικῶν, ℵ, A, B, C.

[2] Comp. 1 Thess. iii. 2; Col. iv. 11.

[3] Evidently a *brief* letter, from the expression τι, ℵ, A, B, C (Luke vii. 40; Acts xxiii. 18). It is now lost, like many other of these minor communications (1 Cor. v. 9). Diotrephes seems to have suppressed this letter, whatever it was. If he could behave so outrageously as he is said to do in the next clause, he would have thought but little of making away with a brief letter.

[4] That is, "rejects my authority." Perhaps it means that this turbulent intriguer refused to acknowledge St. John's "commendatory letter."

[5] John xiv. 26. St. John means that he will draw the attention of the Church to the proceedings of Diotrephes.

[6] φλυαροῖ (1 Tim. v. 13); φλυαρεῖν, the French *déblatérer*. "Apposite, calumnias Diotrephis vocat *garritum*" (Corn. à Lapide).

[7] These proceedings seem so very high-handed, that we might take the words to mean merely that he excluded them from the congregation which possibly met at his house; or we might suppose the meanings of the presents to be "*tries to* hinder them, and *wants to* excommunicate them." Certainly the present often implies the unsuccessful *conatus rei perficiendae* (see my *Brief Greek Syntax*, § 136); but we know too little of Diotrephes, and of the Church in which he had so much influence, to be able to say that he might not have actually excommunicated (as unauthorised interlopers into *his* parish—schismatic intruders, on *his own* authority) those who gave hospitality to Evangelists or who brought "letters of commendation" from St. John. If he was capable of prating against St. John, he might have been capable of this also.

[8] Heb. xiii. 7; 1 Pet. iii. 13. τὸ κακὸν in Diotrephe; τὸ ἀγαθὸν in Demetrio" (Bengel).

[9] 1 John iii. 6—10; iv. 8.

has been borne to Demetrius by all,[1] and by the Truth itself; aye, and we too[2] bear witness, and thou knowest that our witness is true.[3]

"I had many things to write to thee, but I do not wish by ink and reed[4] to write to thee, but I hope immediately to see thee, and we will speak mouth to mouth. Peace to thee.[5] The friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name."[6]

"*Salute the friends by name.*" Salute each of our Christian friends as warmly and as individually as though I had here written down their names. So fitly ends the last of the writings of St. John. The close of his messages to the Church of God is as calm and gentle as the close of his life. God cares for individuals, and therefore the Church of God cares for them also. They may be obscure, humble, faulty; but if they be true disciples they need fear nothing which the world can threaten, and desire nothing which it can offer, for "their names are written in the Book of Life." The aged Apostle speaks of them as "friends." The name, as applied to Christians, is peculiar to him, for Christians regarded each other as "brethren," and therefore as bound together by a tie even closer than that of friendship. But if he uses this word as well as "brethren" and "beloved," it doubtless is from the remembrance of what he alone among the Evangelists has recorded, that the Lord Jesus had called Lazarus "His friend," and that He had said, "Ye are my

[1] "Demetrius was possibly the bearer of the letter" (Lücke).

[2] καὶ ἡμεῖς δέ (1 John iii. 6).

[3] John v. 32; xxi. 24.

[4] The κάλαμος is a split reed. St. John seems to have disliked the physical toil of writing, to which it is quite possible that he had not been accustomed. He probably dictated his longer and more important works.

[5] John xix. 28. "The inward peace of conscience, the fraternal peace of friendship, the heavenly peace of glory" (Lyra).

[6] The allusion is to personal private friends, not the brethren in general.

friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you."

He ends, therefore, fitly with this kind message to individual friends. And after this we know nothing more with certainty respecting him. He was not taken to Heaven in the fiery chariot of glory or of martyrdom, but in all probability he died at Ephesus, in a peaceful and honoured age, among many friends who deeply loved and greatly honoured him. And the last murmur of tradition which reaches us respecting him is that which tells us of his last exhortation. When he was no longer a "Son of Thunder," no longer even an "Eagle of Christ"—when he was a weak and worn old man, with scarcely anything left him but a feeble voice and trembling hands, he still uplifted those trembling hands to bless, and still strove to sum up all that he had taught, in words easy to utter, but of which, after so many centuries, we have yet so imperfectly learnt the meaning—

"Filioli, diligite alterutrum."
"Little children, love one another."

And this he did, as he himself explained, "because such was the Lord's command; and if this only be done, it is enough."

APPENDIX

EXCURSUS I.

THE ASSERTED PRIMACY OF ST. PETER.

THAT St. Peter was a leading Apostle—in some respects *the* leading Apostle—none will dispute; but that he never exercised the supremacy which is assigned to him by Roman Catholic writers is demonstrable even from the New Testament. Anyone who will examine the list of twenty-eight Petrine prerogatives detailed by Baronius[1] will see in their extreme futility the best disproof of the claims of Roman primacy. St. Peter had, as Cave says, a primacy of order, but not a supremacy of power. Such a supremacy our Lord emphatically discountenanced.[2] In his Epistle St. Peter does not assume the title of Apostle, but only calls himself a fellow-presbyter, and rebukes all attempts "to play the lord over the heritage of God." The other Apostles send him to Samaria. The Church at Jerusalem indignantly calls him to account for the bold step which he had taken in the case of Cornelius. Paul, at Antioch, withstands him to the face, and claims to be no whit inferior to the very chiefest Apostle, assuming the Apostolate of the Uncircumcision—that is, of the

[1] *De Rom. Pontif*, i. 17, *seqq.*
[2] Matt. xx. 25—27; Luke xxii. 24—26.

whole Gentile world—as predominantly his own. St. Peter was not specially "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" and though he received from his Lord some of the highest eulogiums, he also incurred the severest rebukes. Even when we turn to the Fathers, we find St. Cyprian saying that "the rest of the Apostles were that which Peter was; endowed with equal participation both of honour and of power."[1] The Presbyter Hesychius calls, not St. Peter, but St. James, 'the prince of priests, the leader of the Apostles, the crown among the heads, the brightest among the stars."[2] He calls St. Andrew "the Peter before Peter." St. Cyril says that Peter and John had equivalent honour. The Promise of the Keys was given to all the Apostles alike;[3] and in the Apocalypse no distinction is made between Kephas and the rest of the Twelve.[4] Origen says that all who make Peter's confession with Peter's faithfulness shall have Peter's blessing.[5] He was eminent among the Apostles;—*supreme* he never was.[6]

EXCURSUS II.

PATRISTIC EVIDENCE ON ST. PETER'S VISIT TO ROME.

St. Clemens of Rome († 101) says that "he bore witness," using the term which implies his martyrdom;[7]

[1] *De Unitat. Eccles.* p. 180.

[2] *Ap.* Phot. *Cod.* 275. Πέτρος δημηγορεῖ ἀλλ' Ἰάκωβος νομοθετεῖ.

[3] Matt. xviii. 17, 18; John xx. 21—23.

[4] Rev. xxi. 14.

[5] In Matt. xvi.

[6] See the question examined in Shepherd's *Hist. of the Ch. of Rome*, pp. 494, *ff.*

[7] *Ep. ad Cor.* v.

but he does not say that this took place at Rome. Ignatius († 114),[1] and Papias[2] (referred to by Eusebius, † 340), use language which may be inferentially pressed into the implication that he had been at Rome. St. Clemens of Alexandria († 220), who tells the story about St. Peter's wife, does not mention Rome.[3] St. Dionysius of Corinth († 165), says that St. Peter and St. Paul both taught in Italy;[4] but the weight of even this slight allusion is neutralised by its being found in the same sentence with the erroneous suggestion that Peter had a share in the founding (*φύτειαν*) of the Church of Corinth. St. Irenæus († 202) makes the dubious statement, that both Apostles took part in the appointment of Linus to be Bishop of Rome.[5] Gaius († 200), as quoted by Eusebius, says that the "trophies" of the Apostles were shown at Rome in his days.[6] Tertullian († 218) makes a similar remark in a passage where he also accepts the legend of St. John's escape from death when he was plunged into a caldron of boiling oil at the Latin gate.[7] Lastly, Origen († 254) is the first who says that Peter was "crucified head downwards;"[8] and St. Ambrose—or a pseudo-Ambrose—tells the story of the Vision on the Appian road. Later allusions to the Apostle's connexion with Rome, which grow more definite as time advances,

[1] Ignat. *Ep. ad Rom.* iv; *οὐχ ὡς Πέτρος καὶ Παῦλος διατάσσομαι ὑμῖν.*

[2] Papias *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* iii. *ad fin.* But the inference is of the remotest kind. It supposes that St. Peter needed Mark as his "interpreter" in Latin.

[3] Clem. Alex. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi.

[4] Dion. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* ii. 25.

[5] Iren. *c. Haer.* iii. 1 and 3, and *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* v. 6.

[6] Gaius, *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* ii. 25.

[7] Tert. *de Praesc. Haer.* 32, 36. See too *Scorpiace*, 15.

[8] Orig. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 1; *ἀνεσκολοπίσθη κατὰ κεφαλῆς οὕτως αὐτὸς ἀξιώσας παθεῖν.*

are found in Arnobius,[1] in Lactantius,[2] in the *Apostolical Constitutions*,[3] and in the pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*.[4]

St. Peter's visit to Rome is of course testified by multitudes of later writers; but their assertions have no independent or evidential value.[5]

EXCURSUS III.

USE OF THE NAME BABYLON FOR ROME IN 1 PET. V. 13.

It has been asserted that St. Peter could not be writing from the real Babylon, because that city was at this period ruined and deserted. Strabo and Pausanias say that it was a mere ruin; Pliny calls it a solitude.[6] But, although we learn from

[1] Arnob. *c. Gent.* ii. 12.

[2] Lactant. *de Mort. Persec.* ii.

[3] *Const. Apost.* vii. 45.

[4] Ps.-Clem. Hom. *Ep. ad Jac.* 1.

[5] The denial, that St. Peter was ever at Rome, by the Waldenses, Marsilius of Padua, Salmasius, &c., was elaborately supported by Fr. Spannheim (*De ficta profectione*, etc., 1679). De Wette, Baur, Winer, Holtzmann, and Schwegler are led to a similar view by their belief in the virulent jealousies between Jewish and Gentile Christians, and Neander was shaken by the arguments of Baur. But the mass of learned Protestants, Scaliger, Casaubon, Grotius, Usher, Bramhall, Pearson, Cave, Schröckh, Gieseler, Bleek, Olshausen, Wieseler, Hilgenfeld, etc., to a greater or less degree, admit his martyrdom or residence at Rome. To enter into a discussion of the Papal claims is here wholly beyond my scope. If the reader has any doubt on the subject, he may read with advantage the articles on the "Petrine Claims," in the *Church Quarterly Review* for April, 1878, April, 1879, and January, 1880, and he will find some brief hints on the subject in Dr. Littledale's *Plain Reasons*. He will find all that can be urged on the other side in Mr. Allnatt's *Cathedra Petri* and Father Ryder's *Catholic Controversy*.

[6] See Is. xiii.; xiv. 4, 12; xlvi., etc. That the Babylon alluded to is the obscure Egyptian fort of that name (Strabo, xvii. 1, p. 807)—a place utterly unknown to Christian history and tradition—is a conjecture which may be set aside without further notice. No human being in the Asiatic Churches to which St. Peter was writing could ever have heard of such a place.

Josephus that the Jews in the city had terribly suffered, first by a persecution in the reign of Caligula, and then by a plague,[1] we have no reason to believe that many of them may not have returned during the twenty years which had subsequently elapsed. Again, it is not proved that St. Peter may not have used the word "Babylon" to describe the *country* or *district*, as is done by Philo,[2] so that he may have actually written from Seleucia or Ctesiphon, in which cities the Jews were numerous;[3] or even from Nehardea or Nisibis, in which they had taken refuge.[4] Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, had been among his hearers on the day of Pentecost, and there is nothing *intrinsically* improbable in the notion of his having gone to visit these crowded communities of the Dispersion. They were so numerous and so important, that Josephus originally wrote his *History of the Jewish War* for their benefit, and wrote it in Aramaic, without any doubt that it would find countless readers.

It has been argued that the geographical order observable in the names "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" — the Churches to which his Epistle is addressed—is more natural to one writing from Babylon than to one who was writing from Rome; but this is an argument which will not stand a moment's consideration.

On the other hand, *against* the literal acceptance of the word "Babylon" there are four powerful arguments. (1). There is not the faintest tradition in those regions of any visit from St. Peter. (2). If St. Peter was in Babylon at the time when his Epistle was written,

[1] Jos. *Antt.* xviii. 9, § 8.
[2] Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium*, 36.
[3] Jos. *Antt.* xv. 3, 1.
[4] Jos. *Antt.* xviii. 9, § 9.

there is great difficulty in accounting for his familiarity with the Epistle to the Ephesians, which was not written till A.D. 63. (3). It becomes difficult to imagine circumstances which could have brought him from the far East into the very crisis of the Neronian persecution in the Babylon of the West. (4). If "Marcus" be the Evangelist, he was with St. Paul between A.D. 61—63,[1] and probably rejoined him just before his martyrdom in A.D. 68.[2] We should not, therefore, expect to find him so far away as Babylon in A.D. 67.

I strongly incline to the belief that by Babylon the Apostle intended to indicate Rome,[3] and we find this interpretation current in the Church in very early days.[4] The Apocalypse was written about the same time as—or not long after—the First Epistle of St. Peter; and in the Apocalypse[5] and in the Sibylline Verses[6] we see that a Western, and even an Asiatic, Christian, when he heard the name "Babylon" in a religious writing, would be likely at once to think of Rome. Throughout the Talmud we find the same practice of applying symbolic names. There Rome figures under the designations of Nineveh, Edom, and Babylon, and almost every allusion to Christ, even in the unexpurgated passages of the Amsterdam edition, is veiled under the names of "Absalom," "That man," "So-and-so," and "The Hung." The reference to

[1] Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24.

[2] 2 Tim. iv. 11.

[3] So the Fathers unanimously; and Grotius, Lardner, Cave, Semler, Hitzig, and the Tübingen school; as against De Wette and Wieseler. See too Lipsius, *Chron. der Röm. Bisch.* (1869); Hilgenfeld, *Petrus in Rom.* (*Zeitschr. f. woss. Theol.* 1872); Zeller, *Zur Petrusfrage* (*ib.* 1876).

[4] Papias, *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* ii. 15, iii. 25; Iren. *c. Haer.* iii. 1, &c.

[5] Rev. xiv. 8; xvi. 19; xvii. 9, 18; xviii. 2, etc.

[6] *Sibyll.* v. 143, 159.

Rome as Babylon may have originated in a mystic application of the Old Testament prophecies, but it had its advantage afterwards as a secret symbol. It is therefore a mistake to suppose that the use of Babylon for Rome would be the sudden obtrusion of "allegory" into matter-of-fact, or that by using it the Apostle would be "going out of his way to make an enigma for all future readers." There is, in fact, a marked accordance between such an expression and the conception which St. Peter indicates throughout his letter, that all Christians are exiles scattered from the heavenly Jerusalem, living, some of them, in the earthly Babylon.[1] An early Christian would have seen nothing either allegorical or enigmatical in the matter. He would at once have understood the meaning, and have known the reasons, alike mystic and political, for avoiding the name of Rome.

EXCURSUS IV.

THE BOOK OF ENOCH.

The quotation from the Book of Enoch by St. Jude, and the traces which it contains of the reciprocal influences of Jewish and Christian speculation, have always attracted the attention of the Church to that singular Apocalypse.

From the end of the 16th century till recent times nothing was known of it except by the quotations in the Fathers and the Greek fragments preserved in the *Chronographia* of Georgius Syncellus, and the *Testa-*

[1] 1 Pet. i. 1, παρεπιδήμοις; v. 13, ἐν Βαβυλῶνι. See Godet's *New Testament Studies*.

ment of the Twelve Patriarchs. In the 17th century it became known that the entire book existed in an Ethiopic translation. Three manuscripts of this translation were brought to England by Bruce, the Abyssinian explorer, in 1773. It was first translated into English by Archbishop Lawrence in 1821, and retranslated into German by Hofmann in 1833, and into Latin by A. F. Gfrörer in 1840.

It consists of an Introduction, i.—vi. 12, containing a Prophecy of Judgment.

vii.—x. Legends about the two hundred fallen angels who went astray with the daughters of men, and taught mankind the Arts, the Sciences, and many forms of luxury.

xi.—xvi. Enoch is sent on a mission to these fallen angels.

xvii.—xxxv. Visions, sometimes (as in the Apocalypse) in Heaven and sometimes on earth, in which Enoch is taught the origin of the elements and the general elements of Natural Science, and is shown the prison of the fallen angels, and the dwelling of the good, where the voice of the murdered Abel sounds.

xxxvii.—lxx.[1] A second "Vision of Wisdom," which (as in the Apocalypse) repeats—though with many variations—all the essential elements contained in i.—xxxv., which are treated as one vision. This section falls into three Parables or Maschals; these are xxxviii.—xliv., chiefly dwelling on the future abode and condition of sinners; xlv.—lv., on those who deny Heaven and God, and the Messianic Judgment which they incur; lvi.—lxx., chiefly on the blessings of the elect.

Chapter xxxvi. is missing.

The section lxxi.—lxxxi. is entitled the Book of the Lights of Heaven. Enoch, orally and in writing, teaches his son Methuselah about the sun, moon, and stars.

The section lxxxii.—lxxxix. contains two dreams. In the first Enoch sees the vision of the Flood, and prays God not to destroy all mankind; in the second he sees an apocalyptic foreshadowing of future history down to the time of Herod the Great (?) with a picture of the days of the Messiah.

Chapters xc., xci. contain Enoch's words of consolation and exhortation to his children.

Chapter xcii. to v. 18 is a sketch of history in ten weeks or periods, of which the first is signalised by the birth of Enoch; the second by the Flood; the third by the life of Noah; the fourth by Moses; the fifth by the building of Solomon's Temple; the sixth by Ezra; the seventh by the encroachments of heathenism; the eighth by rewards, punishments, and the building of a new Temple; the ninth by the Messianic kingdom; the tenth by the judgment of men and angels, and the renovation of the world.

From xcii. 19—civ. the book is mainly didactic, being full of promises and threatenings. In the last chapter (cv.) Enoch relates the birth of Noah, and prophesies that he shall be the founder of a new race.

The Ethiopic text is undoubtedly translated from the Greek, of which we find fragments in St. Jude, in Justin Martyr, and other Fathers, and in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*.[1] Whether the Greek is itself a translation from an original Hebrew book is uncertain. Origen seems to imply that this was the

[1] Orig. *Hom.* 28; *in Num.* xxiv.

case, for he says that the Books (libelli) were not regarded as authoritative "among the Hebrews." That the book in its present form is not by one author, and that the Noachian parts of it are by another hand, is clear. From internal evidence it appears that part at least of the book (chapters i.—xxxv., lxxi.—cv.) was written in the days of the Maccabees; and that chapters xxxvii.—lxx. are not earlier than the days of Herod the Great, and are full of still more recent interpolations. Volkmar has endeavoured to prove that, as a whole, it is not earlier than the reign of Hadrian, and that it expresses the views of R. Akhiva.[1]

One reason for the slighting estimate of the book by the Jews may be that the writer shows no interest in the ritual and Ceremonial Law, and makes no special mention either of circumcision or of the Sabbath.

EXCURSUS V.

RABBINIC ALLUSIONS IN ST. JUDE.

The direct citation of St. Jude (verses 14, 15) from the Book of Enoch is taken from the second chapter, but it is by no means the only trace of a similarity between the two writers.

i. Jude 6 dwells on the fall of the angels which "kept not their own dominion," but "left their own habitation, and are reserved in everlasting bonds

[1] For further information, see Abp. Lawrence's *Prelim. Dissert. and Translation* (1821); Hofmann, *Das Buch Henoch* (1833); and in Ersch and Grüber, *Encycl. s. v.*; Lücke, *Einleit. in d. Offenb.* i. 89—144; Gfrörer, *Jahrh. d. Heils*, i. 93 *fg.*; and especially A. Dillmann, *Das Buch Henoch* (1853).

under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day" (comp. 2 Pet. ii. 4, 5). This, as we have seen, is a topic which occupies a large part of the Book of Enoch. In vii. 2 we are told of two hundred angels who descended on Ardis, the top of Mount Armon. In xii. 5—7, we are told that they "have deserted the lofty sky and their holy everlasting habitation, . . . and have been greatly corrupted on the earth," and in xiv. 4, that they are "to be bound on earth *as long as the world endures*," and (xvi. 5) that they are "never to obtain peace." Their prison-house, where they are to be "kept for ever" (xxi. 6), is "a terrific place," and they are "confined in a network of iron and brass" (liv. 6), which nevertheless consists of "fetters of iron without weight." The last expression is an antiphrasis like the "clankless chains" of Shelley, and the "fetters, yet not of brass," of Æschylus. The author of the Second Epistle of Peter, with lyric boldness, speaks of these fetters as "chains of darkness," and the author of the Book of Wisdom (xvii. 2, 16, 17) evidently had a similar picture in his mind when he speaks of the Egyptians as "fettered with the bonds of a long night," "shut up in a prison without iron bars," and "bound with one chain of darkness." These fallen angels are shut up in a "burning valley," and yet its fires give no light, or only "teach light to counterfeit a gloom," for they are "covered with darkness," and they "see no light" (Enoch x. 1—9).

ii. Again, in v. 13 St. Jude compares the corrupted Antinomians whom he is denouncing to "wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." We might have supposed that the metaphor

was derived from meteors disappearing into the night, or comets rushing off into the illimitable void. But from the Book of Enoch (xviii. 14, 16) we are led to infer that, by the "wandering stars" are meant quite literally *planets* (ἀστέρες πλανῆται), not, as Bengel supposed, because they are opaque, but because they are regarded (with the sun and moon) as "seven stars . . . . which transgressed the commandment of God . . . *for they came not in their proper season.*" What was the exact conception in the writer's mind is impossible to say, but he may have identified the planets with evil spirits because they were objects of idolatrous worship, and were named after heathen deities.[1]

iii. Once more, in v. 7 St. Jude seems distinctly to imply that the sin of the Fallen Angels was analogous to that of the cities of the Plain, in that they, by unions with mortal women, went after strange flesh. This is exactly the view of the pseudo-Enoch. He makes Enoch reproach them (xv. 1—7), because being by nature spiritual, they "*have done as those who are flesh and blood do,*" and have thereby transgressed the very law of their nature.

iv. Nor are these the only references to Rabbinic and other legends by St. Jude. In verse 5 it is said that "Jesus" led the people out of Egypt, and in the second instance destroyed them. The use of the name "Jesus" for "Christ" shows perhaps the somewhat late date of the Epistle. When St. Paul alludes to the legendary wanderings of the Rock in the desert (1 Cor. x. 4), he adds the allegory "and that Rock was Christ." In saying that "Jesus" saved the people out of the land

[1] For two remarkable parallels between the Book of Enoch and the Apocalypse, see the Notes on Rev. vi. 10, 11, and xiv. 20.

of Egypt, St. Jude seems to be identifying Him with the Pillar of Fire, which is one of the many divine manifestations to which Philo compares the Logos.[1]

v. The strange reference to a dispute between Michael and Satan about the body of Moses has not yet been traced to any source whatever. Origen says that it was taken from an Apocryphal book called *The Assumption of Moses;* and Œcumenius says that Satan claimed the body of Moses because he had killed the Egyptian. The words "The Lord rebuke thee," are addressed to Satan by the Lord (who is perhaps meant to be the same as the Angel of the Lord in the previous verse), in Zech. iii. 2. The nearest approach to this legend is in the Targum of Jonathan on Deut. xxxiv. 6, where we are told, with obvious reference to some similar story, that the grave of Moses was entrusted to the charge of Michael.

vi. Again, when it is said that these false and polluted Christians "went in the way of Cain," the reference cannot be to anything recorded in the book of Genesis. There the only crime laid to the charge of Cain is murder. The reference here seems to be mainly to presumption and blasphemy, and to that insolent atheism with which Cain is charged in the Jerusalem Targum on Gen. iv. 7, where he is made to deny that there is such a thing as a Judge or a judgment. The allusion cannot be to the blaspheming Gnostics who called themselves Cainites, for we do not hear of them till much later.[2] It is, however, remarkable that they chose Cain, the Sodomites, and Korah (who are all here mentioned), as their heroes, and as the

[1] *Quis Rer. Div. Haer.*, and *De Vit. Mos.* 2.
[2] Iren. *c. Haer.* i. 31; Epiphan. *Haer.* 38.

representatives of the stronger and better spiritual powers, who were opposed to the Demiurge of the Mosaic Dispensation and the material world.

EXCURSUS VI.

SPECIMENS OF PHILONIAN ALLEGORY.

1. Commenting on Gen. xvii. 16, "*I will give thee a son from her*," and explaining it of the joy of heart which God promises to the virtuous, Philo adds that some explain "*from* her" to mean "*apart* from her," because Virtue does not spring from the soul, but from without, even from God. Others explain the Greek words as though they were a single word (*exautes*), meaning "*immediately*," because all divine gifts are speedy and spontaneous. Others, again, make "from her" mean "*from Virtue*," which is the mother of all good.[1] The simultaneous existence of three such strange devices of exegesis at least shows that Philo might take his premises for granted among the readers whom alone he wished to address.

2. On Gen. xv. 15 he says that in "*Thou shalt go to thy fathers*" some understood by "fathers," not "thy Chaldæan forefathers," but "the sun, moon, and stars;" others explained "father" to mean "archetypal ideas, and the things unseen;" others, the four elements and powers of which the universe is composed—earth, air, fire, and water![2]

3. Each of the Patriarchs represents a condition of

[1] *De nomin. mutat.* § xxv. (Mangey, i. 599).

[2] *Quis rer. div. haer.* (Mang. i. 513). *De Migr. Abraham, ad init.*

the soul. Abraham represents acquired virtue; Isaac, natural virtue; Jacob, virtue acquired by training; Joseph, political virtue. Sarah represents generic virtue, virtue in the abstract; Rebecca represents endurance; Leah is persecuted virtue; Pharaoh is the mind set against God; Moses is the prophetic word. Everything and every person stands for something else. Egypt represents the body; Canaan symbolises piety. A kingdom is an emblem of Divine wisdom; a pigeon, of human wisdom; a sheep, of the pure soul.

4. Writing on Gen. xviii. 6, he idealises the appearance of the three angels into the fact that the seeking soul recognises God, His love, and His might. The three measures of meal indicate that the soul must embrace and treasure up this threefold manifestation of God. The word for cakes (*enkruphias*) means that the Sacred word about God and His power must be concealed in the initiated soul.[1]

5. On Gen. xxxii. 10, "*With my staff I passed over this Jordan*," he says it would be a poor thing (ταπεινὸν) to understand it literally. Jordan means all that is base, the staff means discipline: Jacob intended to imply that by discipline he had risen above baseness.

Only by such means could Philo get rid of the representation of God as having human parts and human passions. But with this method he can boldly set aside, as literally false and only allegorically true, whatever offends his philosophic convictions. Thus, on Gen. ii. 21, after saying that the letter of the narrative is mythical, he argues that otherwise it would be absurd.

[1] ἐγκρυφίας means "cakes baked by being *hidden* in ashes" (*De Sacr. Abel et Cain*, Mang. i. 173).

By "*ribs*" are meant merely the powers of life,[1] and the notion that Eve was formed out of a material rib seems to him degrading.

6. He often accepts the general fact, but allegorises all the details. The tree of Paradise, the serpent, and the expulsion, are merely symbols; and he confidently addresses his explanation of them to "the initiated." The heart of his system is seen in his comments on "*Let us make man in our image.*" The plural shows, he says, that the angels as well as God had a share in the making of man, and since man is of mixed nature, we must suppose that the good side of his nature came from God, the weak side from the angels. But he goes on to explain that the verse applies to the creation of man in the idea, not in the concrete.

EXCURSUS VII.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF PHILO'S VIEWS ABOUT THE LOGOS.

In God, no less than in man, Philo distinguishes between the speech and the reason. The Divine reason embraces the whole intelligible world, the world of ideas, what he sometimes calls "the idea of ideas." The Divine speech includes the whole world of active agents and Divine forces.

(i.) Hence it is that, in a phrase borrowed by Apollos (Heb. iv. 12), he calls the Word "the *cutter* of all things." The phrase is founded on an allegorical explanation of Gen. xv. 9. Philo says that in the

[1] *Leg. allegg.* i. 18 (Mang. i. 70).

sacrifice there described the she-goat symbolises the sense, the calf the soul, the dove Divine wisdom, the pigeon human wisdom. The wise man sees all these as gifts from above. The text says that "*he*" divided these sacrifices, and since the name of Abraham is not repeated, "*he*" must mean the Logos, and the truth indicated is that the Logos, "whetted to sharpest edge," divides all perceptible things to their inmost depths—the soul into the reasonable and the unreasonable; speech into true and false; the world of sense into distinct and indistinct phenomena. These divided parts are, by way of contrast, placed opposite to each other. The doves alone are not divided, because Divine wisdom is simple, and cannot be cleft into opposing contrarieties.[1] Thus God, whetting His Word, which cutteth all things, divides the formless and abstract essence of all things, and the four elements of the universe, and the animals and plants compounded from them. Hence the phrase, "the cutter Word," seems to be based on the distinction between the Logos as the primeval Idea, and the Logos as a creative Force.

(ii.) The world of Ideas, to which the existing world corresponds as a copy to its archetype, lies in the Divine Logos. Philo illustrates this by saying that, when God bade Moses to lift up a serpent in the wilderness, He did not say of what metal it was to be made, because the ideas of God are abstract and immaterial; Moses, in carrying out the concrete realisation, is obliged to use *some* substance, and therefore makes the serpent of brass.[2] Similarly he holds that God is not

[1] *Quis rer. div. haer.* § xlviii. (Mang. i. 491); see Gfrörer, *Philo*, i. 184—187.

[2] *Leg. allegg.* ii. § 20 (Mang. i. 80).

to be grasped by human knowledge, but that the WORD is. Hence, writing on Gen. xxii. 16, he says, "God is the God of wise and perfect beings, but the Logos is the God of us who are imperfect."

(iii.) Philo uses so many analogies to express his notion of the Logos that he falls into contradictions, and leaves his readers in confusion. The Logos, in various passages of his voluminous writings, is the creator of species, although He is Himself the Idea of Ideas; He is the seal of God; He is the Divine force which dwells in the universe; He is the chain or band which keeps the world together; He is the law and ordinance of all things; He is the giver of wisdom, the warden of virtue; He is the manna which nourishes the soul; He is the fatherland of wise souls, the pilot of the wise; He is their controlling conscience, their Paraclete; He is the Divine wisdom which is the daughter of God.[1]

EXCURSUS VIII.

PATRISTIC EVIDENCE AS TO THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

The canonicity of the Epistle to the Hebrews, its right to be accepted as a part of Holy Scripture, the perfect truthfulness of the contemporary character which it assumes, its greatness, importance, and authority, and the fact that it was written before the fall of Jerusalem, are not in question. These points have never been seriously disputed. Some have seen allusions to the Epistle in St. James and the Second of St. Peter.[2]

[1] See various passages quoted in Gfrörer, *Philo*, i. 176—243.

[2] 2 Pet iii. 15, 16; Ja. ii. 24, 25.

Setting these aside as improbable, it was certainly known to St. Clemens of Rome, and largely used by him in his letter to the Corinthians;[1] and it is possible—though no more—that it was the source of some of the parallels adduced from the writings of Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and the Pseudo-Barnabas. But in the Western Church no single writer of the first, second, or even third century quoted it *as St. Paul's*. Not only did Basilides (*cir.* A.D. 125) exclude it, though he acknowledged the other Pauline Epistles,[2] but we are expressly told that St. Hippolytus († 235 ?) denied that it was written by St. Paul. The authority for this fact is late and heretical,[3] yet there seems no reason to reject so positive a statement. And this remark of St. Hippolytus, together with the place assigned to the Epistle in the Peshito, indicates the opinion of the Syrian Church in the first half of the third century, if, as seems probable, the learned and eloquent Bishop of Portus came originally from Antioch.[4] We have the same assurance about St. Irenæus († A.D. 202). We find from Eusebius that in a work attributed to Irenæus (but which Eusebius had

[1] Ἐν ᾗ τῆς πρὸς Ἑβραίους πολλὰ νοήματα παραθεὶς ἤδη δὲ καὶ αὐτολέξει ῥητοῖς τισιν ἐξ αὐτῆς χρησάμενος σαφέστατα παρίστησιν ὅτι μὴ νεὸν ὑπάρχει τὸ σύγγραμμα (Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 38). "Omnino grandis in utrâque similitudo est" (Jer. *De Virr. illust.*). "Der Hebräerbrief ist ganz und gar in sein Denken übergegangen" (Tholuck, *Einleit.* 2). Yet, strange to say, Clemens never *mentions* it by name. This alone seems almost fatal to the Pauline authorship.

[2] Jer. *Procem. in Ep. ad Tit.* Basilides was a Gnostic, but he seems to have adopted the ordinary Canon of his day; this, therefore, would seem to show that at that time the Alexandrians did not recognise the Epistle as St. Paul's.

[3] Steph. Gobar, *ap.* Phot. *Bibl. Cod.* iii. 291 (Migne); and also Photius himself (Wieseler, *Untersuch.* i. 12).

[4] Gieseler, i. § 341. On Hippolytus see Kurtz, *K. G.* i. 106. Mommsen, *Abhandl. d. Sächs. Gesellsch.* i. 595.

never seen)[1] he quoted from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and *from the Wisdom of Solomon*. But no such quotation was to be found in any of his best-known works, and in any case he did not assign the Epistle to St. Paul.[2] Indeed, the mention of the Epistle with the *Wisdom of Solomon* seems to imply that he regarded the two works as standing on the same footing. The Presbyter Gaius only recognised thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, and did not number this Epistle among them.[3] The Canon of Muratori (*cir.* A.D. 170) either does not allude to it, or only under the damaging description of a letter to the Alexandrians, current under the name of Paul, but forged in the interests of Marcion's heresy ("*ad haeresim Marcionis*").[4] It is remarkable that Marcion, in the middle of the second century, rejected it, though many passages might have been used to support his views.

[1] The Βιβλίον διαλέξεων διαφόρων.

[2] The fragment in which he is supposed to quote Heb. xiii. 14 (Stieren's *Irenaeus*, i. 854, *seq.*; ii. 361, *seq.*) is of very doubtful genuineness, and even if genuine proves nothing.

[3] Gaius, *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 20. As he makes this remark in immediate connexion with severe animadversions on the precipitance (προπετείαν) and audacity of those who admitted the authenticity of spurious writings, it would appear that he even regarded the Pauline hypothesis with some indignation; and as he was a λογιώτατος ἀνήρ, his opinion is important. Nothing, however, is known of Gaius, and Bp. Lightfoot (*Journ. of Philology*, i. 98) has conjectured that he is none other than Hippolytus using his own prænomen as an interlocutor in the dialogue against Montanism.

[4] If "Gaius" was, as Muratori thought, the author of the celebrated Canon, the next remark, "fel enim cum melle misceri non congruit," would harmonise with the severe sentiments alluded to in the previous note, and there would be an additional sting in this if we accept the suggested allusion to Heb. xii. 15, and the reading, ἐν χολῇ for ἐνόχλῃ. The writer of the Canon says that St. Paul only wrote (like St. John) to *seven* Churches. Delitzsch and Lünemann say that the Epistle to the Hebrews cannot be meant by the "Epistle to the Alexandrians," because it is anonymous; but the writer of the Canon does not say that it was "inscribed" with the name of Paul. (See Wieseler, i. 27, and Hesse, *Das Murat. Frag.* p. 201 *ff.*)

Novatian, useful as it would have been to him, and frequently as he quotes Scripture, never even alludes to it. Tertullian († A.D. 240) ascribes it to St. Barnabas,[1] and did not regard it as a work of St. Paul, for he taunts Marcion with falsifying the number of St. Paul's Epistles by omitting (only) the Pastoral Epistles. St. Cyprian († A.D. 258), in his voluminous treatises, neither quotes nor mentions it. Victorinus († A.D. 303) ignores it. It is separated or omitted in some of the oldest MSS. of the Vetus Itala.[2] The first writer of the Western Church who ascribes it to St. Paul (and probably because he found it so ascribed in Greek writers) is Hilary of Poictiers, who died A.D. 368.[3] It was not till quite the close of the fourth century that in the Western Church

[1] Tert. *c. Marc.* v. 20.

[2] No name is attached to it in the Peshito, and the fact that in that version it is placed *after* all the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, in spite of its size and importance, seems to show decisively that the Syriac translators did not regard it as the work of the Apostle (Wieseler, *Eine Untersuchung über d. Hebräerbrief* (1861), i. 9). It is only in later Syriac versions that it is called "The *Epistle of St. Paul* to the Hebrews."

[3] In the fourth century neither Phoebadius, nor Zeno, nor Hilary the Deacon, nor Optatus once quote it, though they frequently quote St. Paul; nor, in the fifth century, Siricius, Caelestine I., Leo the Great, Orosius, Evagrius, or Sedulius. St. Ambrose († 397), a student of Greek writers, quotes it as St. Paul's, and so does his friend Philastrius; but the latter tells that it was not read to the people in church, or only "sometimes," and (in another passage) that it had been ordained by the Apostles and their successors that *only thirteen Epistles of St. Paul* (and therefore *not* the Epistle to the Hebrews) should be read in the Catholic Church. Latin writers misunderstood, and therefore found it difficult to accept, the phrase "To Him that made Him," τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτὸν ("quia et *factum Christum* dixit"), in iii. 2; and they looked with suspicion on the rhetorical style ("quia *rhetorice* scripsit sermone plausibili"), and disliked the use made by the Novatian schismatics of vi. 4—8, which St. Ambrose finds it hard to reconcile with St. Paul's conduct to the Corinthian offender (*De Poenitent.* ii. 2). The intrinsic greatness of the Epistle overcame these hesitations, and, when once accepted, it was accepted as St. Paul's on the supposed authority and undoubted custom of the Alexandrian writers.

it began to be popularly accepted as St. Paul's. As this popular acceptance at that late epoch does not possess any critical importance, it is needless to enumerate the names of writers who merely run in the ordinary groove. Among those writers who really thought about the matter doubts as to the Pauline authorship were expressed—as, for instance, by Isidore of Seville—as late as the seventh century.[1] Now, even if this fact stood alone—that the Western Church for nearly four centuries refused to admit the Pauline authorship—we should regard it as fatal to that hypothesis. And for this reason. If it had been written by St. Paul, it is inconceivable that St. Clemens of Rome, his contemporary and friend, should not have known that it was so. St. Paul was not thus in the habit of concealing an identity which, on the contrary, he habitually placed in the foreground. But if St. Clemens had been aware that it was really a work of St. Paul, nothing can be more certain than that he would have mentioned so precious a truth to the Church of which he was bishop. If he said anything at all about the authorship, it must have been that whoever wrote it *Paul did not.* Thus, and thus only, can we account for the conviction of the Roman Church for nearly four centuries, that the opinion about it in the Eastern Church was erroneous. To say that St. Clemens, "in his love for the author, would not do what the author himself has not done; he would not betray the secret, &c.," is to overlook plain facts in the desire to support current traditions. Anyone may see for himself that the author, though he does not mention his own name, has no wish to conceal his identity from those to whom he wrote, and, indeed, assumes that they

[1] † A.D. 636.

were perfectly aware who it was who was thus addressing them. The Apostolic letters, it must be remembered, were always conveyed to their destination by responsible and accredited messengers. No Apostolic Church would have paid attention to an unauthenticated epistle.

How very little weight can be attached to the quotation of the Epistle in a loose and popular way as St. Paul's may be seen in the case of two great men, St. Jerome († A.D. 420) and St. Augustine († A.D. 430). By their time—in the fifth century—the current of irresponsible opinion ran strongly in favour of the Pauline authorship, and to throw any doubt upon it was to brave the charge of being arrogant or unorthodox. It is not, therefore, surprising that both these remarkable men in an ordinary way speak of the Epistle as St. Paul's in passages where they merely wish to make an allusion without exciting a controversy. They were justified in doing this, because they saw that even though it could not have been written by St. Paul, yet it was Pauline in its main doctrines. In ordinary treatises it was not desirable to be constantly correcting the multitude. But when they are writing carefully and accurately they are too independent not to indicate their real opinion. St. Jerome over and over again quotes it as St. Paul's, yet often with the addition of some doubting or deprecatory phrase. When he deals directly with the question, he treats it as unimportant, but admits that the Epistle was accepted with some hesitancy,[1] and that many considered it to be the work of Barnabas or Clemens.[2] St. Augustine often quotes it as St. Paul's,

[1] Even Rufinus, though he supposed it to be by St. Paul, adds, "Si quis tamen eam receperit." (*Invect. in Hieron.*)

[2] His opinion seems to have wavered more than once (see Bleek

and his authority had probably no small share in influencing the Synods, which declared it to be authentic.[1] Yet in his later writings he so constantly quotes it merely as "the Epistle to the Hebrews," that Lardner says, "One would think that he studiously declines to call it Paul's."[2] The "accommodation" to which these eminent writers condescended in popularly referring to it as being (in a sense) a work of the Apostle, led to the rigidity of the ordinary acceptance; yet even at the close of the sixth century "no Latin commentary on it was known to Cassiodorus."[3]

Introd.), but he never felt at all sure that St. Paul wrote it. "*Quicunque est ille*, qui ad Hebraeos scripsit epistolam" (*Comm. in Amos*, 8). "*Si quis vult recipere* eam epistolam quae sub nomine Pauli ad Hebraeos scripta est" (*Comment. in Tit.*). "Relege ad Hebraeos epistolam Pauli, *sive cujuscunque alterius eam esse putas*, quia jam inter ecclesiasticas est recepta" (*id.*). "Et Paulus apostolus loquitur, *si quis tamen ad* Hebraeos epistolam suscipit" (*in Ezek.* xxviii.). "Omnes Graeci recipiunt et *nonnulli Latinorum*" (*Comm. in Matt.* c. 26). "Licet de eâ multi Latinorum dubitent" (*Catal.* 59). "Apud Romanos usque hodie quasi apostoli Pauli non habetur" (*in Is.* viii. 18). "Pauli quoque idcirco ad Hebraeos epistolae contradicitur, quod ad Hebraeos scribens utatur testimoniis quae in Hebraeis voluminibus non habentur" (*in Is.* vi. 9). "Et nihil interesse cujus sit, cum ecclesiastici viri sit, et quotidie ecclesiarum lectione celebretur" (*Ep.* 129, *ad Dard.*), etc.

[1] Hippo, A.D. 393; Third Council of Carthage, A.D. 398; Fifth Council of Carthage, A.D. 419. But the two former Councils only say "Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, and one of his to the Hebrews."

[2] The force of truth compels him to insert an occasional caution, such as "Quamquam nonnullis incerta sit;" "quoquo modo se habeat ista quaestio;" "quam plures apostoli Pauli esse dicunt, quidam vero negant," etc. See the many passages referred to in the exhaustive catalogue of Bleek, from whom all succeeding commentators have freely borrowed. Nothing can show more forcibly the manner in which writer after writer will snatch at the most futile explanation of something which tells against a current notion than that we find Augustine repeating the absurdity, which has lasted down to our own day, that St. Paul concealed his name in order not to offend the Jews! ("Principium salutatorium de industria dicitur omisisse, ne Judaei *nomine ejus offensi* vel inimico animo legerent, vel omnino non legerent," etc. (*Expos. Ep. ad Rom.* § 11).

[3] Davidson, ii. 227. That the old hesitation continued may be seen from

The opinion of the Eastern Church originated in Alexandria. To the Alexandrian School, though they did not discover the secret of the authorship, the Epistle was extremely precious, because it exactly expressed their own views, and was founded on premises with which they were familiar. It was, therefore, natural that they should desire to give it as high an authority as possible; and in the Epistle itself they found a general support for the notion that it was written by St. Paul.

(*a.*) But this assertion cannot be traced farther back than to the unsupported guess of the venerable Pantænus. "The blessed Presbyter," as Clemens of Alexandria († A.D. 220) calls him in a passage of his last work, the *Hypotyposes*,[1] assigned two reasons why St. Paul had not mentioned his own name in the salutation, as he does in every other Epistle. It was, he said, because the Lord Himself had been sent to the Hebrews as an Apostle of the Almighty,[2] so that St. Paul suppressed his own name out of modesty; and it also was because St. Paul was a herald and Apostle of the Gentiles, so that a letter from him to the Hebrews was, so to speak, a work of supererogation.[3]

the fact that it formed originally no part of D (Codex Claromontanus), is omitted in G (Cod. Boernerianus), and is only found in Latin in F (Cod. Augiensis). The two latter MSS. are of the *ninth* century. In the Vulgate it is placed after Philemon.

[1] *Ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 13. It is clear that if Eusebius had found any traces of an *earlier* tradition he would have mentioned them, for he brings together all the reasons he can in favour of the Pauline authorship. His statement, therefore, tends to prove that even in the Eastern Church the Epistle, in spite of its obvious phenomena, had not been assigned to St. Paul by any writer or by any tradition of importance in the first two centuries. (Wieseler, i. 15.)

[2] The expression was taken by Clemens from Heb. iii. 1.

[3] Διὰ μετριότητα . . . διὰ τε τὴν πρὸς τὸν Κύριον τιμὴν διὰ τε τὸ ἐκ περιουσίας καὶ τοῖς Ἑβραίοις ἐπιστέλλειν. (*Hypotyposes; ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 14.)

Both these attempts to explain a fact so damaging to the Pauline authorship of the letter are untenable. If St. Peter in writing to Jews calls himself an Apostle, there was no reason why St. Paul should have scrupled to give himself the same title; nor was the division of office between him and the other Apostles so rigid as to prevent his addressing Jews. The "Apostolic compact" did not prevent St. Peter from addressing Gentiles. If it was thus rigid, it tells against St. Paul's having written this Epistle at all, but not against his authenticating it with his name. He constantly addressed Jews, and constantly maintained against them his independent right to the highest order of the Apostolate. In writing to them he would have been *least* inclined to waive the dignity which he had received directly from his Lord. No authority can therefore be allowed to the opinion of Pantænus. It was a conjecture derived from the references at the close of the letter, and possibly even from the false reading "*my chains*" (τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου) instead of "prisoners" (δεσμίοις) in x. 34.[1] The conjectural suggestions by which he tried to support his opinion are so weak that they actually tell against it, and show that the eminence of Pantænus by no means consisted in a power of critical discernment.

(*b*.) If the great ST. CLEMENS OF ALEXANDRIA accepted the Pauline authorship, he did so mainly in deference to the opinion of Pantænus, and only in a modified form.

[1] Euthalius (cir. 460) especially refers to τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου as one of the arguments for the Pauline authorship. (Migne, *Patr. Graec.* lxxxv. 776, *ap.* Bleek; Alford, iv. 1, p. 15.) Τοῖς δεσμίοις is the reading of A, D, the Vulg., Peshito, &c. But even if the received text be right (with ℵ, E, H, K, &c.), there is no proof that the writer is St. Paul, but only that the writer had been in prison—a common case with Christians of the first century.

For although he often quotes the Epistle as St. Paul's, he was aware of the difficulties of such an opinion. He supposed that the letter was originally written in Hebrew, and was translated into Greek by St. Luke. This notion may have originated in the resemblance of style between it and the Acts. With this suggestion we shall deal later on. But meanwhile St. Clemens, not content with the explanation offered by Pantænus of the anonymity of the letter, relies on another, which is still more groundless. St. Paul suppressed his name, he says, because he did not wish to divert the attention of the Jews from his arguments, being well aware that they had taken a prejudice against him and looked on him with suspicion.[1] Thus even St. Clemens contents himself with a reason which will not stand a single moment's consideration. The tone of the letter throughout, as well as the closing salutations, prove that the writer is known to his readers;[2] and the supposition that he wanted to entrap their attention before revealing his identity is too singular for serious refutation.[3]

(*c.*) There is no ancient writer whose opinion on the subject would carry more weight than that of ORIGEN, whose splendid originality was not crushed by his immense erudition. Now it is quite true that Origen frequently quotes the Epistle as St. Paul's,[4] but it is no less evident that he only does so in accordance with

[1] Clem. Alex. *Hypotyp.*, *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 14. *Adumbratt.* in 1 Petr., p. 1007. Clemens was, it must be admitted, somewhat credulous.

[2] xiii. 18, 23.

[3] See Bp. Wordsworth's surprising remarks on this subject. The unions of great learning with want of subtle discernment even in the Alexandrian School may be seen in their acceptance of the Epistle of Barnabas as authentic in spite of its extravagant allegorising and incipient Gnosticism.

[4] Not unfrequently, however, he uses the phrase *κατὰ τὸν ἀπόστολον*. See the passages in Bleek's Introduction.

common custom, and that by such casual expressions he as little intends to prejudge the question of authorship as the authors of the Revised Version, who still retain the name of St. Paul in the title. A modern writer who should casually happen to quote "the Second Epistle of St. Peter," or popularly to refer to Ecclesiastes as a work of King Solomon, would have a right to feel himself aggrieved if such a general reference was interpreted as the deliverance of a final and critical opinion. Origen, like Jerome and Augustine, whenever he wishes to be accurate, introduces some phrase of caution which indicates his own opinion. We know what he thought on the subject, for he wrote Homilies on this Epistle, which are now unfortunately lost, but of which one or two fragments have been preserved by Eusebius. In these we have the deliberate conclusion of the greatest of the Fathers. "That the character of the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews," he says, "does not show the unlearnedness (*τὸ ἰδιωτικὸν*)[1] of the Apostle who confessed that he was unlearned in word (that is to say, in language), but that the Epistle is more Hellenic in the structure of its style, everyone would admit who is capable of judging the differences of language;[2] but, on the other hand, that the thoughts of the Epistle are wonderful, and not inferior to the acknowledged apostolic writings, *that* too is a truth which every one would acknowledge who attends to the reading of the apostolic works." He subsequently attributes the *thoughts* to the Apostle, and the composition to some one who made

[1] On the exact import of this word see my *Life and Work of St. Paul*, i. 106.

[2] *Ὅτι . . . ἐστὶν ἡ Ἐπιστολὴ συνθέσει τῆς λέξεως Ἑλληνικωτέρα, πᾶς ὁ ἐπιστάμενος κρίνειν φράσεων διαφορὰς ὁμολογήσαι ἄν.* (*Ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 25)

notes of what the Apostle said.[1] "If, then," he concludes, "any Church holds this Epistle to be the work of St. Paul, let it be congratulated (εὐδοκιμείτω) even for this, since it was not without some grounds that ancient authorities have handed it down as Paul's. But who actually wrote it God only knows. The historical tradition that has come down to us is divergent: for some say that Clemens, who became Bishop of the Romans, wrote the Epistle, and some that it was Luke, who also wrote the Gospel and the Acts."[2]

The passage is expressed somewhat obscurely, because (as we are sorry to admit) Origen, with all his courage, accepted the expediency of concession, in certain cases, to popular ignorance and current prejudice. It is clear that he did not accept the Pauline authorship in the ordinary sense of the word. He was too good a scholar, too profound a student, too familiar with the niceties of Greek expression, and too unbiassed a critic not to perceive that the "style" of the Epistle to the Hebrews is far more correct than that of St. Paul. He therefore held that Clemens of Rome may have written it, or that it might be attributed to St. Luke. But he also saw that it came from *the School* of Paul; that it expresses his sentiments, and is,

[1] ἡ δὲ φράσις καὶ ἡ σύνθεσις ἀπομνημονεύσαντός τινος τὰ ἀποστολικὰ καὶ ὡσπερεὶ σχολιογραφήσαντος τὰ εἰρημένα ὑπὸ τοῦ διδασκάλου. (*Ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 25.)

[2] This limited and hesitating expression implies that the Churches generally rejected this opinion, and perhaps that it prevailed in the Alexandrian Church alone. Now the natural tendency would so absolutely be to ascribe the letter to St. Paul, and the grounds for doing so, if taken apart from the objections, are so reasonable (οὐκ εἰκῇ) that the fact that until this view became stereotyped there were many who rejected it, is of itself a proof how strong were the reasons which compelled them to run counter to the popular inference. The general ἱστορία was against the Pauline authorship: the local παράδοσις was for it; and even this was probably reducible to the loose opinion of Pantænus.

so to speak, quite worthy of him. This is why he does not care to disturb the opinion of any Church which accepted it, and says that "the ancient authorities" —under which term he vaguely refers to Pantænus and Clemens[1]—had not been guided by arbitrary conjecture in handing down a tradition of its Pauline origin.

(*d.*) The opinion of EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA is no less hesitating and wavering. In common parlance he quotes the Epistle as St. Paul's, but he too was well aware that it did not belong to the *homologoumena*. He was induced by the style to conjecture that it was a translation by St. Clemens of Rome from a Hebrew original.[2] He does indeed say in one place that there were *fourteen* Epistles of St. Paul, and this Epistle to the Hebrews had its place as Pauline in the fifty manuscripts of the Canonical books of the New Testament which he caused to be written out for the Emperor Constantine, who wished to place them in the churches of his new capital. The example of Eusebius is therefore very instructive. Passage after passage might be adduced from his writings to show that he accepted the Epistle as genuine; and yet when he is writing definitely and accurately he says, "The *thirteen* Epistles of St. Paul are manifest and clear. It would not, however, be fair to ignore that some have regarded the Epistle to the Hebrews as spurious (ἠθετήκασι), saying that it is opposed (ἀντιλέγεσθαι) by the Church of Rome as not being by St. Paul." Popular reference is one thing, and accurate statement is another. In disputed questions a current allusion possesses no critical impor-

[1] Hug (*Einleit.* ii. 317), Delitzsch (*Hebr.* § xvii.), and Bleek all exaggerate the meaning of these expressions. (See Wieseler, i. 17.)

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 3, 38; vi. 13.

tance. And this statement of Eusebius is remarkable as showing that, in spite of the general truth of St. Jerome's remark that "all the Greeks accept," there were some even in the Greek Church who were in doubt about it.[1] Can any honest man read this review of the early patristic evidence without feeling that it is on the whole *unfavourable* to the theory of the Pauline authorship?

EXCURSUS IX.

MINOR RESEMBLANCES BETWEEN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS AND THE WORKS OF PHILO.

A few separate instances may here be thrown together of minor points of contact between the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews and that of Philo:—

(*a.*) In iii. 7—15 the writer lays great stress on the word "*to-day.*" Philo defines "to-day" as "the infinite and interminable æon," and says "Till to-day; that is for ever."[2]

(*b.*) In ii. 6 he quotes from a Psalm by saying that "*one, somewhere, testified*" (*πού τις*). He was of course aware that the Psalm is assigned to David; but the same vague form of quotation is found frequently in Philo.

(*c.*) In iii. 3 we find the remark, "*He that builded the house hath more honour than the house.*" Philo uses the same argument.[3]

[1] We learn this also from the *Iambics* of Amphilochius, who says that *τινες* rejected it: *τινες δέ φασι τήν πρὸς Ἑβραίους νόθον οὐκ εὖ λέγοντες.*

[2] *Leg. allegg.* iii. 8; *De profug.* § 11. (Mangey, i. 92, 554.)

[3] *De plant. Noe*, § 16: *ὅσῳ ὁ κτησάμενος τοῦ κτήματος ἀμείνων καὶ τὸ ποιητικὸς τοῦ γεγονότος.*

(*d.*) In iv. 15 he says that Christ shared in all our infirmities, "*except sin.*" Philo says that "the High Priest is not man, but the Divine Word, free from all share not only in willing but even in involuntary wrongdoing,"[1] and speaks also of the mercy and gentleness of His nature.[2]

(*e.*) The word μετριοπαθεῖν—literally "*to suffer moderately*"—in v. 2 is found also in Philo, though it does not occur in the Septuagint or elsewhere in the New Testament.

(*f.*) In vi. 5 he speaks of "*tasting the utterance of God.*" Philo speaks of the utterance (*rhema*) as well as the Word (*Logos*) of God, and speaks of its nourishing the soul like manna.[3]

(*g.*) In vi. 13 we have the distinctions between God's *word* and His *oath*, and the impossibility of His swearing by any but Himself. We find in Philo the same thought and the same expressions.[4]

(*h.*) In vii. 27 the High Priest is said (without rigid accuracy) to offer sacrifices *daily*. Philo uses the same expression.[5]

(*i.*) In ix. 16, 17 he avails himself of the two senses of *diatheke*, a "covenant" and a "will." Philo does the same.[6]

(*j.*) In x. 3 he speaks of sacrifices involving "a *remembrance* of sin." Philo says that the sacrifices of the godless do not work a remission, but a remembrance of

[1] *De profug.* § 20. (Mang. i. 563.)

[2] *id.* § 18. (Mang. i. 559, 561.)

[3] *De profug.* § 25; *Leg. allegg.* iii. 60. (Mang. i. 564, 120.)

[4] *Leg. allegg.* iii. 72; *De Abraham.* § 46. (Mang. i. 128; cf. 181, ii. 39.)

[5] *De spec. leg.* § 23. εὐχὰς καὶ θυσίας τελῶν καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν.

[6] *De nom. mutat.* § 6. (Mang. i. 586.) Cf. *De Sacr. Abel.* (Mang. i. 172.)

sin, and that they force us to recall our ignorances and transgressions.[1]

(*k.*) In xiii. 5 he uses the quotation, "*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*". In that form the words are not *exactly* found in Scripture, but Philo quotes from Scripture in the same words.[2]

EXCURSUS X.

"SALEM" AND JERUSALEM.

One passage alone is adduced from Scripture in proof that Salem may be used as a shortened poetical form for Jerusalem, namely, Ps. lxxvi. 2, "In Salem also is his tabernacle and his dwelling-place in Zion." But not to dwell on the fact that this can only be a poetic licence, and that we should not expect to find an isolated recurrence of it in a plain historic narrative, the meaning of that verse cannot be regarded as indisputable. The Psalmist may be referring to the Salem of Melchizedek as a different place from Jerusalem. Again, the word may mean "peace;" and both the LXX. and the Vulgate render it, "His place has been made in peace."[3] Besides this, in the days of Abraham, and for centuries afterwards, Jerusalem was only known by the name Jebus.[4] But though the Targums render Salem by Jerusalem in this passage of Genesis,[5] it was an old tradition that the Salem intended is the city near Shechem

[1] *De plant. Noe*, § 25; *De vit. Mos.* iii. § 10. (Mang. i. 345, ii. 246.)

[2] *De conf. ling.* § 33. *οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω.* (Mang. i. 430.)

[3] LXX. *ἐγενήθη ἐν εἰρήνῃ ὁ τόπος αὐτοῦ.* Vulg., "Et factus est in pace locus ejus."

[4] Judg. xix. 10, 11, &c.; 2 Sam. v. 6.

[5] So, too, Jos. *Antt.* i. 10, § 2 x.

which is mentioned in Gen. xxxiii. 18 and John iii. 23.[1] There was a town of this name near to Ænon,[2] and its site has been traditionally preserved. The former passage is again doubtful. The verse is rendered by the Targums, by Josephus, and by many eminent scholars,[3] not "*Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem,*" but "*Jacob came in safety to the city of Shechem.*" The Samaritans always maintained that it was at Gerizim that Melchizedek had met Abraham; and St. Jerome tells us that the most learned Jews of his days regarded *this* town as the Salem of Melchizedek, and the ruins of a large palace were shown there which was called the Palace of Melchizedek.[4] It is therefore doubtful whether Jerusalem is intended, especially since the writer touches so very slightly on the name. The word Salem[5] means rather "peaceful" than "peace;" and hence some again have supposed that "peaceful king" was a title of Melchizedek,[6] and one which marked him out still more specially as a type of the Messiah;[7] but this is a late and improbable conjecture. It may, however, be justly maintained that the typical character of Melchizedek

[1] It is mentioned also in Judith iv. 4.

[2] Jerome says, "Salem civitas Sicimorum quae est Siehem." It would be more accurate to say that it was *near* Shechem. He places it eight miles south of Bethshean (*Onom.* s. v. *Ep. ad Evang.* 1). The ruined well there is now called Sheikh Salim (Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* iii. 333).

[3] *E. g.*, Knobel, Tuch, Delitzsch, and Kalisch on Gen. xxxiii. 18.

[4] Jer. *ad Evagr.* See, too, the tradition preserved by Eupolemos (*ap.* Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* ix. 17), that Abram was entertained at Gerizim (Ewald *Gesch.* iii. 239; Stanley, *Sin. and Pal.*, p. 237).

[5] שָׁלֵם.

[6] In Bereshith Rabba it is said that *Melchî Shalem* means "perfect king," and that he was so called because he was circumcised—referring to Gen. xvii. 1 (*vide* Schöttgen, *ad loc.*). Philo calls him "king of peace (for that is the meaning of Salem)" (*Leg. allegg.* iii. 25).

[7] Is. ix. 5; Col. i. 20, etc.

would rather be impaired than enhanced by his being a king of Jerusalem. For Jerusalem was the holy town of the Aaronic priesthood, and it might seem more fit that the Royal Priest should have been connected with some other sanctuary as a type of Him in Whose day "neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem should men worship the Father," but should worship Him in all places acceptably, if they worshipped in spirit and in truth.

EXCURSUS XI.

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE AND THE HOLIEST PLACE.

The altar of incense (like the altar of burnt-offering) was called Holy of Holies (Ex. xxx. 10), and in Ex. xxx. 6; xl. 5, it is expressly said to be placed "before the mercy-seat," and "before the ark of the testimony." From its very close connexion with the ceremony of the Day of Atonement, on which it was (as well as the mercy-seat) sprinkled with the blood of the sin-offering (Lev. xvi. 18), it is called in 1 Kings vi. 22, "the altar that is by the oracle," or, rather, "which belongs to the oracle." It is clear, then, (1) that a peculiar sanctity appertained to the altar beyond the sanctity of the other things which were in the Holy Place;[1] and (2) that its position was close to the veil, and in immediate relation to the position of the Ark, of which it seems to have been regarded as an appurtenance. Even on these grounds the Holiest might be generally said "to have" or contain

[1] Incense was supposed to have an atoning power (Yomá, f. 44, *a*; Num. xvi. 47).

the incense-altar. But then (3) it must be borne in mind that the writer is thinking specially of the Day of Atonement, and on that day the inner veil was lifted by the high priest, so that the Holiest and the Holy Place might (on that day) be regarded as a single sanctuary,[1] which would give still minuter accuracy to the term used. Nor is this a mere conjecture. In the vision of Isaiah (vi. 1—8) the prophet is supposed to be standing in the Holy Place, and he sees the Lord uplifted on His throne above the six-winged Seraphim, just as the Shechinah was supposed to rest between the out-stretched wings of the Cherubim above the mercy-seat. Then one of the Seraphs flies from the throne with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken "*from off the altar.*" Similarly, in the vision of the Apocalypse (viii. 1—5) the seer sees an angel with a golden censer, to whom is given much incense, that he may offer it upon "*the golden altar which is before the throne.*" In these considerations, then, we may fairly see the solution of the difficulty. The writer is not speaking with pedantic minuteness, but his expression is justifiable, and even accurate if we place ourselves in his point of view, and imagine that we are looking at the Holy and the Holiest as they appeared on the greatest day of the Jewish year. But though he has made no mis-statement, he comes very near it, and it is clear that St. Paul would have written with more familiar accuracy about these ritual details.

[1] See a Paper by Prof. Milligan, in the *Bible Educator*, iii. 230.

EXCURSUS XII.

CEREMONIES OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

At earliest dawn the High Priest chose a young bullock for a sin-offering and a lamb for a burnt-offering for himself and his house. After the ordinary[1] morning service, he bathed himself, and put on his holy linen garments of purest white and of great value.[2] Then he laid his hands on the head of the young bullock, and confessed the sins of himself and his house. He next took two kids for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering for the sins of Israel,[3] and cast lots upon them at the entrance of the Tabernacle. The lots were drawn from a golden urn called *culpi*, which stood in the Court of the Priests, but close to the worshippers. One lot was "for Jehovah," the other "for Azazel." The goat on which the lot for Jehovah fell was sacrificed for a sin-offering. He sacrificed the bullock as an atonement for himself and his house, and the priesthood in general. The blood of the bullock was stirred by an attendant lest it should coagulate. Then came the most awful moment of all. Filling a censer with burning coals from the altar, and his hands with sweet incense beaten small, he slowly approached the sanctuary, and in his white robes entered into the presence of God through the veil of

[1] All these bathings were done in a special golden laver in a little chamber called "Happarveh," above the room where they salted the hides of the victims (Middoth v. 2; Surenhusius, *Mishnah*, v. 376 (quoted by McCaul, p. 155).

[2] On these see Yoma, iii. 7, and Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 266.

[3] Altogether he offered fifteen animals, according to Maimonides (see Lev. xvi; Num. xxix.).

the Holiest Place. When he did so he was accompanied, the Rabbis say, by three acolytes, of whom one held him by each hand and the other by the jewels of his robe. Entering the Holiest, he threw the incense on the burning coals of the censer, that the thick and fragrant smoke might rise in a cloud between him and the mercy-seat.[1] Through the smoke, he sprinkled the blood of the bullock seven times against the front of the mercy-seat and in front of it.[2] Then, going out and sacrificing the goat for the sins of Israel, he sprinkled its blood in the same manner on the mercy-seat, thus making an atonement for the Holy Place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel. Going forth with the blood of the bullock and the kid, he made a similar atonement for the great brazen altar of burnt-offering, the horns of which he sprinkled with the blood seven times. Altogether there were forty-three sprinklings of the blood, and the remainder was poured away at the base of the great altar. When the whole priesthood and sanctuary were thus cleansed he brought the live goat to the door of the Tabernacle, and, laying both his hands upon its head, confessed over it all the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the people, and sent the goat to carry those sins away into the wilderness, into a land not inhabited, and thus to free the consciences of the worshippers from the sense of unforgiven guilt. Divesting himself of the holy linen garments, which he left in the Holy

[1] This somewhat mysterious proceeding arose from the dispute between the Sadducees and Pharisees, in which the former maintained that the incense should be kindled *before* the High-Priest actually entered the Holy Place, whereas the Halachah required that it should be done *after* he entered.

[2] See Knobel on Lev. xvi. 14.

Place, and which were never to be worn again, he once more bathed, probably in the Court of the Tabernacle,[1] and, putting on his glorious apparel of purple and gold and fine linen, with its bells and pomegranates and rich embroidery, he came forth and offered the burnt-offerings for himself and the people, and burnt the fat of the sin-offering.[2]

EXCURSUS XIII.

IMPRESSIONS LEFT ON THE MINDS OF THE JEWS BY THE CEREMONIES OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

We can trace in Jewish literature how powerful was the impression which this day and its ritual had made upon the Jewish imagination.

Thus, in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, after more briefly mentioning the other worthies and heroes of Jewish history, the writer lingers longest and most lovingly on the glorious figure of the High Priest Simon, the son of Onias, as he appeared on the great Day of Atonement—

"How was he honoured in the midst of the people in his coming out of the sanctuary! He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full; as the sun shining upon the Temple of the Most High, and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds. . . . As fire and incense in the censer, and as a vessel of beaten gold set with all manner of precious stones. . . . When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory, when he went up to the holy altar, he made the

[1] Lev. xvi. 24, which should be rendered "in a" (not *the*) Holy Place, as in vi. 16.

[2] I have omitted some of the less certain minutiæ. These may be found in Dr. Edersheim's *Temple and its Services*, chap. xvi.

garment of holiness honourable. When he took the portions out of the priests' hands he himself stood by the hearth of the altar compassed with his brethren round about, as a young cedar in Lebanon, and as palm-trees compassed they him round about. So were all the sons of Aaron in their glory, and the oblations of the Lord in their hands, before all the congregations of Israel. And finishing the service at the altar, that he might adorn the offering of the Most High Almighty, he stretched out his hand to the cup, and poured of the blood of the grape, he poured out at the foot of the altar a sweet-smelling savour unto the Most High King of all. Then shouted the sons of Aaron, and sounded the silver trumpets, and made a great noise to be heard for a remembrance before the Most High."[1]

Five chapters earlier he has dwelt with similar enthusiasm on the person of Aaron—

"He exalted Aaron, a holy man like unto him (Moses), even his brother of the tribe of Levi. An everlasting covenant he made with him, and gave him the priesthood among the people; he beautified him with comely ornaments, and clothed him with a robe of glory. He put upon him perfect glory; and strengthened him with rich garments, with hosen, with a long robe, and the ephod. And he compassed him with pomegranates, and with many golden bells round about, that as he went there might be a sound, and a noise made that might be heard in the Temple, for a memorial to the children of his people; with a holy garment and gold, with blue silk and purple, the work of the embroiderer, with a breastplate of judgment, and with Urim and Thummim, with twisted scarlet, the work of the cunning workman, with precious stones graven like seals, and set in gold. . . . He set a crown of gold upon the mitre, wherein was engraved Holiness, an ornament of honour, a costly work, the desires of the eyes, goodly and beautiful. Before him there were none such, neither did any stranger put them on, but only his children, and his children's children perpetually. Their sacrifices shall be wholly consumed every day, twice continually. Moses consecrated him, and anointed him with holy oil: this was appointed unto him by an everlasting covenant, and to his seed so long as the heavens should remain. . . . He chose him out of all men living to offer sacrifices to the Lord, incense, and a sweet savour, for a memorial, to

[1] Ecclus. l. 5—16.

make reconciliation for his people. He gave unto him his commandments, and authority in the statutes of his judgments, that he should teach Jacob the testimonies, and inform Israel in his laws."[1]

Nor did these intense feelings of admiration grow less keen as time advanced. To the Jew of the days of our Lord, the High Priest—degraded as was his office by the vice and violence and unspiritual greed of its Sadducean representatives[2]—was still the most memorable figure of all his nation; and even their princes—a Herod of Chalcis, and a Herod Agrippa—thought it no small enhancement of their dignities if they received from the Romans the special prerogative of keeping the "golden robes" of the great Day of Atonement. Nothing more nearly precipitated the civil war which ultimately ruined the fortunes of Judaism than the attempt of the Romans to hold the Jews under entire subjection by keeping these robes under their own control, and so having the power to hinder, if they chose, the one ceremony on which the national well-being was believed most immediately to depend.

Even long centuries after the observances of Judaism had become impossible, Maimonides, in his *Yad Hachazakah*, carefully preserves for us all the traditional

[1] Ecclus. xlv. 6—22.

[2] The high-priestly duties were not only severe, but would be most trying, and even revolting, to any one who was not animated by deep religious feelings. When the tract *Pesachim* (f. 113, *a*), lays down the rule, "flay a carcase, and take thy fee, *but say not it is humiliating*, because I am a priest, I am a great man;" this is doubtless a reminiscence of the days when families like the Boethusim were only anxious *to have had* the dignity, and so, like modern aldermen, to "pass the chair." The Rabbis long remembered with scorn and indignation the High-priest Issachar Kephar Barkai, who had *silk gloves* made for himself, that he should not soil his hands with the sacrifices! (Kerithoth, f. 28 *b*) and Elazar Ben Charsom, who wore a coat worth 20,000 minas, so thin that his brother-priests forbade its use (Yoma, f. 35 *b*).

precepts of the Day of Atonement—the fifteen sacrificial victims, the fumigation and cleaning of the lamps by the High Priest, the seven days' seclusion, the sprinkling of his person on the third and seventh day with the ashes of a heifer; the daily rehearsal of all the rites which he had to perform, the disputes between the Sadducees and the Pharisees about the minutiæ of the day; the five baths and ten washings of consecration on the day itself; the utterance ten times of the full name of God; the reason why the name was pronounced in an almost inaudible recitative: the sprinkling of the blood once above and seven times below the mercy-seat, which was traditionally developed into forty-three sprinklings; the watch-towers and signals by which it was indicated that the goat "for Azazel" had reached the wilderness; the reading and reciting by memory as he sat in the Court of the Women in his priestly robes; the tying of the scarlet cloth round the goat's horns;[1] the washing of hands and feet in golden bowls; and the multitude of the details to which the nation clung with fond devotion as representing the culminating splendour of the ritual with which they connected all their hopes of forgiveness.

It may be said that even now the impression of this high-priestly splendour on the great day (Yoma) is not exhausted. In the festival prayers still read for that day we read—

"Even as the expanded canopy of heaven was the countenance of the Priest."

"As the splendour which proceedeth from the effulgence of Angels was the countenance of the Priest."

He is compared to "the appearance of the bow in the

[1] Yoma, f. 66 *b*.

midst of the clouds;" to "a rose in the midst of a garden;" to "a garden of roses in the midst of thorns;" to "a star;" to "the golden bells in the skirts of the mantle;" to "the sunrise;" to "the congregation covered with blue and purple;" and to "the likeness of Orion and the Pleiades."[1]

EXCURSUS XIV.

THE IDENTITY OF "JOHN THE PRESBYTER" WITH "JOHN THE APOSTLE."

The majority of those who have questioned the authenticity of the Apocalypse have assigned it to a supposed younger contemporary of the Apostle, who, they say, was known in the early Church as "John the Presbyter." If it can be shown that the very existence of "John the Presbyter" is in the highest degree problematical, great additional force will be given to the already strong proofs that the Apocalypse, the Gospel, and the Epistles are indeed the work of the Evangelist St. John. In recent times the supposed existence of this "nebulous Presbyter" has been made an excuse for denying altogether the work and the residence of St. John in Asia.[2]

[1] See Hershon, *Treasures of the Talmud*, p. 200.

[2] Vogel, *Der Evang. Johannes*, 1800. Lützelberger, *Die kirchl. Tradition über d. Ap. Johannes*, 1840. Keim, *Gesch. Jesu von Nazara*, vol. i., p. 160, ff. Scholten, *Der Ap. Johan. in Klein-Azië*, 1871. Holtzmann, *Eph. und Kolosser-briefe*, 1872. On the other side see W. Grimm, *Johannes*, in Ersch and Grüber. Baur, *Gesch. d. christl. Kirche*, vol. i., pp. 82—147, &c. Krenkel, *Der Apost. Johannes*, pp. 133—178. Strauss, Schwegler, Zeller, Hilgenfeld, even Volkmar all reject the new theory. Renan (*L'Antéchrist*, pp. 557—589) only thinks that Scholten has succeeded in relegating the facts to a sort of penumbra.

I have long doubted whether there ever was such a person as this "John the Presbyter," and I had arrived at this conclusion, and arranged my reasons for holding it, before I saw the paper of Prof. Milligan in the *Journal of Sacred Literature* for October, 1868.[1] The papers of Riggenbach (*Jahrb. für deutsche Theologie*, vol. xiii. p. 319), and of Zahn in the *Studien und Kritiken* for 1866, I have not yet seen, nor Zahn's *Acta Johannis* (1880).[2] I have purposely abstained from consulting them in order that I might state my argument in my own way and as it occurred to myself. It will have been useful if it helps in ever so small a degree to get rid of "a shadow which has been mistaken for a reality," "a sort of Sosia of the Apostle, who troubles like a spectre the whole history of the Church of Ephesus."[3]

The question of the separate existence of a "John the Presbyter" turns mainly upon the meaning of a passage of Papias, quoted by Eusebius, and upon the criticism of that passage by Eusebius himself.

Let us first see the passage of Papias.

In his *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord* (*Λογίων Κυριακῶν ἐξήγησις*) Papias had assigned to himself the task of preserving with his best diligence and accuracy, and of interweaving in his five books, the apostolic traditions which were still attainable.

"*I shall not scruple*," he says, "*to place side by side with my interpretations all the things that I ever rightly learned from the Elders and rightly remembered, solemnly*

[1] I differ from Prof. Milligan in his interpretation of the meaning of Papias.

[2] Subsequently to writing this paper I have read Zahn.

[3] Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, p. xxiii.

affirming their truthfulness." Then, after telling us that, unlike most men, he was indifferent to idle gossip and secondhand information, and sought for direct evidence as to the words of Christ, he adds: "*but if at any time any one came who had been acquainted with the Elders, I used to enquire about the discourses of the Elders—what Andrew or what Peter said* (εἶπεν), *or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew, or any one of the disciples of the Lord; and what Aristion and John the Elder, the disciples of the Lord, say* (λέγουσι). *For I thought that the information derived from books would not be so profitable to me, as that derived from a living and abiding utterance.*"[1]

The general meaning of this passage is clear. The good Bishop of Hierapolis tells us that he wished, in setting forth his "interpretations," to derive all the information he could from the fountain head. We learn from St. Luke himself that, before he wrote his Gospel, many had already attempted to perform a similar task, and the Evangelist evidently implies that he was dissatisfied with the majority of these efforts. It is a fair inference from the expressions which he uses that some of these narratives were founded on insufficient knowledge, and were lacking in carefulness. It is possible that these tentative sketches of the Gospel narrative—all of which have now perished—admitted apocryphal

[1] As the question turns on the meaning of this passage, I append the Greek. *οὐκ ὀκνήσω δέ σοι καὶ ὅσα ποτὲ παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καλῶς ἔμαθον καὶ καλῶς ἐμνημόνευσα συγκατάξαι ταῖς ἑρμηνείαις διαβεβαιούμενος ὑπέρ αὐτῶν ἀλήθειαν. Εἰ δέ που καὶ παρακολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἔλθοι τοὺς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνέκρινον λόγους· τί Ἀνδρέας ἢ τί Πέτρος εἶπεν ἢ τί Φίλιππος ἢ τί Ἰωάννης ἢ Ματθαῖος, ἤ τίς τῶν Κυρίου μαθητῶν, ἅτε Ἀριστίων καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης οἱ τοῦ Κυρίου μαθηταὶ λέγουσιν. Οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων τόσουτόν με ὠφελεῖν ὑπελάμβανον, ὅσον τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης.*—Papias, *ap. Euseb. H. E.* iii. 39.

particulars or narrated true circumstances with erroneous details. Such documents would be sure to contain some contradictions, and would create much uncertainty in the minds of Christians. The Four Gospels were written in fulfilment of an imperative need. Now if imperfect or unauthorised works, such as the sketches to which St. Luke alludes, had come under the notice of Papias, he would naturally regard them with suspicion, and would feel that their uncertainties discredited their authority. He was indeed acquainted with the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, and perhaps, though I do not think that this can be regarded as certain, with the Gospel of St. John.[1] But stories were floating about, such, for instance, as that respecting the death of Judas Iscariot, and that about "a woman accused before our Lord of many sins," which diverged more or less from the accounts in the Gospels. Papias felt that he would be rendering a service to the Church if he collected from eye-witnesses all the *authentic* information which could still be gathered as to facts. It was even more important to him and to the Church to learn the accurate truth about asserted *doctrines*. If "the books" to which he refers included, as Bishop Lightfoot has conjectured,[2] some of the mystic heresies and absurdities of the early Gnostics, they fully deserved the tone of depreciation in which he speaks of them. He was acting wisely in endeavouring to bring to a focus the last glimmerings of direct Apostolic tradition.

[1] Eusebius does not quote any allusion of Papias to the Gospel of St. John, but in an argument prefixed to a Vatican MS. of the ninth century, we are told that he testified to its genuineness; and a quotation from "the Elders," in Irenæus, *may* be derived from Papias. Westcott, *On the Canon*, p. 77. It must be admitted that this evidence is somewhat shadowy.

[2] *Contemporary Review*, August, 1867, and August, 1875.

It seems then that he had long been in the habit—perhaps ever since his early youth—of gleaning from every available source the testimony of the Twelve Apostles. His book was probably written after the last Apostle was dead, and he considered that it owed much of its importance to the old traditions which he had gathered while it was yet possible to do so. In the passage which I have quoted he is not speaking of present times, but is referring to what he used to do in the days of his youth and early manhood.

Now certainly if Papias had been a careful modern writer we should have inferred from this passage that the John mentioned in the first clause was a different person from the John mentioned in the second. In the first, he says, that it had been his habit to enquire from any who had known "the Elders"—of whom he especially mentions seven Apostles—what these "Elders" *said;* and also "what Aristion and John the Elder, the disciples of the Lord, *say*."

But although this would be the *natural* inference, it is by no means the *certain* inference. The antithesis may be between the past and present tense ("said" and "say"), and not between two sources of original information. There is nothing to forbid the explanation that when Papias met any one who had known the immediate Apostles and disciples of the Lord—St. John among them—he made notes of what (according to his informant) these Elders said; but in writing this clause he remembers that, at the time when he was making his notes, two of the immediate disciples of the Lord were not dead but living; namely, Aristion—to whom, since he was not an Apostle, he does not give the direct title of "Elder"—and John, whom he identifies

with those whom he has mentioned in the first clause by calling him, as he had called them, "the Elder."

Certainly such a way of expressing himself would show that Papias was a man who wrote in a very simple and loose style; but this is exactly what we know to have been the case. It is true that, in one place, if the clause be genuine, Eusebius calls him "a man in all respects of the greatest erudition and well acquainted with Scripture."[1] But the genuineness of this eulogistic clause is very uncertain, since it is omitted in several manuscripts, as well as by Rufinus, and (which is important) in an ancient Syriac Version. Three chapters further on Eusebius tells us that Papias was "a man of exceedingly small intelligence, as one may infer from his own writings."[2] Such a man might easily write in a confused style. One at least of the passages which Eusebius quotes from the *Exposition* bears out his unfavourable opinion of the ancient bishop's ability. Nor are we left to form our judgment of his style solely on the opinion of Eusebius. Another of the passages which the historian quotes from Papias (and to which I have referred further on) is equally wanting in precision, and is therefore susceptible of more than one interpretation.

I. Now, first of all, no difficulty can arise as to the title given to St. John. Papias calls all the other Apostles "the Elders," and it is only natural to assume that he gives the same title to St. John in the same sense. The word "Elder," like the word "Apostle," had two different senses. In its ordinary sense it was

[1] ἀνὴρ τὰ πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα λογιώτατος. Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 36.

[2] σφόδρα σμικρὸς ὢν τὸν νοῦν ὡς ἂν ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων τεκμηράμενον εἰπεῖν. *Id.* iii. 39.

applicable to many hundreds of persons, for it meant any Christian who was member of a Presbytery. But it had a *special* sense, in which it meant one who belonged to the earliest generation of Christians. In this sense it is constantly used by Irenæus, and is applied to Papias himself, though he was not a Presbyter but a Bishop of Hierapolis, and though by the time of Irenæus the distinction between "Bishop" and "Presbyter," which is not found in the writings of the New Testament, had been gradually introduced. If the Second and Third Epistles of St. John be, as the Church has generally inferred, by the same author as the First, the case is strengthened for identifying "John the Elder" with "John the Apostle," for in both those Epistles St. John gives himself this very title. That it was in no sense inappropriate may be seen from the fact that St. Peter, in addressing Elders, calls himself their "fellow Elder."[1] Besides this, when used with the definite article, it would be a title of great significance, and yet would accord with the modesty and reticence which were habitual with St. John. There was no need for the last survivor of the Apostles to give himself the title of "Apostle," to which, in its loftiest sense, all men knew that he had an undisputed claim. He did not wish to assert his own immense authority. But in calling himself "the Elder" he used a term doubly impressive. He implies that he was an Elder in a peculiar sense, both because he was entitled from his great age to respect and reverence, and also because he was raised above the rest of Elders by the dignity of his position as the last of the Twelve, and the last of those who could say "I have seen the Lord." So far, then, we see that, whether

[1] 1 Pet. v. 1.

they were the same person or not, the John in the first clause and the John in the second are each characterised by two identical titles. Each is called an "Elder," and each is called "a disciple of the Lord." Surely if Papias had wished to describe two different persons he would have given some separate and distinctive title to the second and inferior John. It is a reasonable inference that Papias is only mentioning the same person twice over in an intelligible, though loose and inartistic way, to distinguish between reports of his sayings which were brought to him when St. John was yet living and after he was dead.

But, besides this, I am far from sure that the sentence is not loosely constructed in another sense. By the figure of speech called zeugma, or rather, syllepsis, the same word, even in the most classical writers and in all languages, is often made to serve two purposes in the same sentence. A verb is often used with two clauses which is only appropriate to one of them, as in Pope's line—

"See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crowned,"

where from the participle "crowned" we must understand the word "surrounded" to suit the first half of the line. In other instances we are compelled by the sense to borrow from one verb another which may be even opposite in meaning, as in St. Paul's—

κωλυόντων γαμεῖν, ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων.[1]

"Forbidding to marry, [commanding] to abstain from meats," where from κωλυόντων (forbidding) we must under-

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 3, comp. γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα οὐ βρῶμα, 1 Cor. iii. 2.

stand κελευόντων (commanding) to suit the second clause.[1] It is then perfectly legitimate to understand Papias to mean that he *used to enquire* what Peter, John, etc. *said*, and when opportunity occurred *used to make personal notes* of what Aristion and John *say*.[2] What he derived from St. John would, if such were his meaning, have been of two descriptions, namely, (1) Reports of his conversations from others, and (2) Actual notes of his living testimony taken down in intercourse with the Apostle himself when Papias was young. And that Eusebius is not guilty of mere carelessness in interpreting him to mean that he actually heard "John the Elder" is, I think, shown by the words which follow, in which Papias, thinking mainly of his last clause, speaks of the importance of the "living and abiding voice." Indeed, he says in his opening sentence that some of his notes were derived from immediate intercourse with some of these "Elders" *as well as* (εἰ δὲ καὶ κ.τ.λ.) from trustworthy reports of what they had said to others.

There are, then, two strong arguments for construing the sentences of Papias as I have here proposed. They are all the stronger because they are both derived from Eusebius himself, though he may be called the original inventor of the theory about "John the Presbyter."[3]

(1.) One of these arguments is that Eusebius so construed the sentence. He indeed makes "John the Elder" of the first clause a different person from the "John the Elder" of the second clause; but he para-

[1] This is called *zeugma*; in *syllepsis* the *same* word is taken in *two different senses*.

[2] Ἀνακρίνω means "I examine," "sift," or "question."

[3] Dionysius of Alexandria had given a timid hint that there *might* have been such a person, but Eusebius, by a bold criticism, assumes that there was.

phrases the sentence thus: "Papias testifies that he had received the sayings of the Apostles from those who had been acquainted with them, but says *that he had been himself a hearer of Aristion and of John the Elder.*" He has been accused of error and carelessness in thus understanding the sentence, but I think that I have shown his construction of it to be, so far, perfectly justifiable.

(2.) The other argument is that Eusebius, in an earlier book, the *Chronicon*, says without any hesitation, that *Papias was a hearer of St. John the Apostle.*[1] Now, that this was the truer and more unbiassed conclusion, seems clear on other grounds. I shall show later on that "the Elder" is quoted for statements which could hardly have come from any but an Apostle. And besides the ancient and frequent *testimony* that Papias had seen and conversed with St. John the Apostle, it would be inconceivable *à priori* that one who was searching for first hand and authentic testimony should never have taken the trouble to go from Hierapolis to Ephesus to consult an Apostle of the highest authority, who was then living at Ephesus as the acknowledged head of the Asiatic Church.

The argument, therefore, that Eusebius was more likely than we are to have known whether there was or was not a "John the Presbyter," and whether Papias was *his* hearer or the hearer of St. John the Apostle, because Eusebius possessed all the writings of Papias, and we do not, falls signally to the ground. Indeed, it tells the other way. In his *History* he *reasons himself into the belief* that Papias was only the pupil of "the

[1] So, too, Iren. *c. Haer.* v. 33. Ἰωάννου μὲν ἀκουστής, Πολυκάρπου δὲ ἑταῖρος γεγονώς. It is monstrous to suppose that Irenæus would use the simple word "John" if he only meant the Presbyter.

Presbyter;" but he had all the writings of Papias in his hand when he wrote the *Chronicon*, and there he says, without any hesitation, that Papias was a pupil of the Apostle. "John the Presbyter" is the creature of Eusebius's later criticism. If he could have quoted from Papias a single other passage which in any way countenanced his existence, there would have been no need to base his existence upon a mere conjecture.

On the other hand, the belief that Papias really had seen and heard the Apostle St. John, rests not upon conjecture, but upon the distinct testimony of Irenæus, who says that Papias was "a hearer of John, and an associate (ἑταῖρος) of Polycarp."[1] Justin Martyr lays the scene of his dialogue with Trypho in Ephesus; and he quotes the Apocalypse as the work of the Apostle.[2] That the John intended is the Apostle—the only John of whom Irenæus knew anything—is sufficiently clear, because Irenæus, in his letters to Victor and to Florinus, distinctly says so.[3] Apollonius, Bishop of Ephesus, says that the Apostle lived at Ephesus, and wrote the Apocalypse.[4] Melito, Bishop of Sardis, must have held the same opinion, as is clear from the silence of Eusebius.[5] Apollinarius, who succeeded Papias as Bishop of Hierapolis, A.D. 170, and was therefore specially likely to be well informed, must have known that both Polycarp and Papias were hearers of the Apostle.[6] Jerome, in his

[1] Iren. *c. Haer.* v. 33. So too Œcumenius, on Acts ii.; Nicephorus, *H. E.* iii. 20; and Anastasius Sinaita (*Hexaem.* vii.), who calls him a pupil of the "bosom-disciple" (ὁ ἐπιστήθιος). See Routh, *Rel. Sacr.* i. 15.

[2] Just. M. *Dial.* 81.

[3] Iren. *c. Haer.* iii. 1, § 1, and *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* v. 20—24.

[4] *Ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* v. 18.

[5] See Jer. *De Virr. Illustr.* 24.

[6] *Ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 27; v. 19. Jer. *De Virr. Illustr.* 26.

De Viris Illustribus, says the same.[1] Till very recent times no one ever breathed a doubt that *Polycarp* had been a hearer of the Apostle, and had by him been appointed Bishop of Smyrna.[2] If, then, Polycarp was a hearer of the Apostle, there can be no difficulty in accepting the testimony that Papias, who was a friend and contemporary of Polycarp, had enjoyed the same peculiar privilege.

II. But now let us examine more closely the criticism of Eusebius[3] upon the passage of Papias. He says "that Papias mentions the name of John twice, and in the first clause places him with Peter and the rest of the Apostles, clearly indicating the Evangelist; but that in the second clause he ranks him with others who were not Apostles, placing Aristion before him, and he distinctly calls him 'an Elder;' so that even in this way he indicates the truth of the statements of those who have said that there were two who had the same name in Asia, and that there were two tombs in Ephesus, and that each is still called 'a tomb of John.' We ought to attend to these facts, for it is probable that it was the *second* John who saw the Apocalypse which passes under the name of John, *unless any one wishes to believe that it was the first.*"

It should be most carefully observed that Eusebius does not here profess to know anything whatever about this "John the Elder," and that he is not quite fair in saying that Papias calls him "*an* Elder." Papias did not call him "*an* Elder," but "*the* Elder," which may be a very different thing. Eusebius also fails to notice that the "John" of the second clause is described by

[1] Jer. *l. c.* c. xviii.

[2] Tert. *De Praescr. Haer.* v. 30.

[3] *H. E.* iii. 39.

exactly the same two designations as the John of the first clause, namely, as one of the "Elders," and as a "disciple of the Lord." Eusebius is only led to infer that there was a John who was not the Apostle, (1) by his criticisms of this single passage; (2) by the fact that "some" had said so; and (3) because these persons stated that there were still two tombs at Ephesus which were known by the name of John. And yet, after all, Eusebius is so little convinced by his own reasoning—he is so anxious "to steer between the Scylla and Charybdis of yes and no"—he sees that the evidence for the Apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse is so strong—that he is still obliged to leave the authorship of the book a matter of individual opinion. Whatever may be thought as to the ingenuity of his reasoning, Eusebius furnishes the most complete refutation of his own theory by the inability to produce a single grain of testimony or even of tradition in favour of the view that this separate "Presbyter" had ever existed.

Two questions then arise:—

a. Why was Eusebius so anxious to believe in the existence of this "John the Presbyter"?

β. Who were the "some" on whose testimony he relies?

a. The answers to both questions are very easy. Eusebius disliked the Apocalypse. He seldom quotes it. In one passage he refers to it as possibly (εἴ γε φανείη) spurious, and in another as possibly (εἴ γε φανείη) genuine, leaving the decision very much to the reader himself. He was extremely opposed to the fanatical and sensuous Chiliasm, which derived its sole support from this book; and on this very ground he was

inclined to look down upon the old Bishop of Hierapolis, with his credulous stories and Judaic sympathies. If the millennial traditions which Papias had collected in his *Expositions* could be dissociated from the authority of the Apostle, and made to rest on that of an unknown and sub-apostolic personage, it would be more easy to set them aside.

β. As to the "some" to whom Eusebius alludes, they probably reduce themselves to Dionysius of Alexandria, just as the "some" to whom Dionysius himself alludes as disparaging the Apocalypse probably reduce themselves to the Alogi. At any rate, the only trace of any conjecture as to the existence of "John the Presbyter" previous to Eusebius, is in the famous criticism on the Apocalypse by Dionysius. In that criticism, preserved for us only by Eusebius,[1] the learned Patriarch of Alexandria says that it is clear from the testimony of the book itself that a "John" wrote the Apocalypse, but that instead of calling himself "the disciple beloved by the Lord" (as in the Gospel), or, "the brother of James," or "one who has actually seen and heard the Lord," which would have clearly indicated his individuality, he only calls himself "your brother and fellow in affliction," and "a witness of Jesus," and "blessed because he saw and heard these revelations." "Now I think," continues Dionysius, "that there have been many who bore the same name as John the Apostle, who loved that designation out of their love and admiration and emulation for him, and because they wished to be loved of the Lord as he was; just as many children are named after Paul and Peter. Nay, there is even another

[1] *H. E.* vii. 25.

John in the Acts of the Apostles, who bore the surname of Mark. I cannot say whether this be the John who wrote the Apocalypse, for it is not recorded that he went with them (Barnabas and Paul) into Asia; but I think that it was *some other John* of those who were in Asia, since some even say that there are two tombs in Ephesus, each of which is called 'the tomb of John.'"

If the "some" to whom Eusebius appeals, include any one except Dionysius of Alexandria and those who had given him his information, we have at any rate no clue as to who they were. Had they been persons of special authority, or with special opportunities of knowing the facts, Eusebius would have told us something about them. And what does the evidence furnished by Dionysius amount to? *Not* (be it observed) to the statement that *there were two Johns*, but only that John was a common name, and that there were two tombs in Ephesus, each of which was pointed out by the local ciceroni as a tomb of John! He does not even pretend to imply that they were the tombs of *two* Johns. On the contrary, each was asserted to be the tomb of the Apostle.

III. Could any reader of modern German criticisms believe that beyond this we know absolutely nothing about John the Presbyter, as distinct from John the Apostle?[1] And how utterly baseless a foundation is this for such a superstructure! Dionysius wrote about the middle of the third century,[2] when John had been laid in his grave for at least a century and a half.

[1] No importance can be attached by any one to the guess or invention of the *Apostolical Constitutions* (vii. 46), that the Presbyter succeeded the Apostle as Bishop of Ephesus.

[2] He succeeded to the Presidency of the Catechetical School at Alexandria in A.D. 231.

There is no tradition worth the name as to the place and manner of the Apostle's death, and in the absence of authentic information, it was believed or assumed that he died at Ephesus. Since this was the common belief, it was quite natural that the Christians who visited Ephesus should ask to be shown the grave of John.[1] Now the duplicate sites of many other "holy places" in Palestine and elsewhere show that if, in a case where there was no certainty, *one* supposed grave was pointed out, it was a very likely result that there would be *two*. The two graves were merely rival sites for a spot which, if either of them were genuine, would be full of interest. Yet, on grounds so slight as these, Dionysius—who, though he speaks reverently of the Apocalypse, could not persuade himself that it was the work of the Apostle—first infers that there were two Johns; and, secondly, that one of them may have been sufficiently famous to be the author of the Revelation.

That Dionysius is merely clutching at a theory is proved by his half suggestion that the author may have been John Mark the Evangelist; a suggestion in which, so far as I am aware, he has had scarcely a single follower for 1,500 years.[2]

But, further than this, his suggestion proves a great deal more than he intended by it. This second John, if he existed at all, must have been an exile in Patmos, and a person of such immense and acknowledged in-

[1] Similarly the "trophies" of Peter and Paul were pointed out at Rome as early as the days of the Presbyter Gaius (A.D. 213).

[2] The only exceptions are Beza and Hitzig. Beza, *Prolegom. in Apoc.* p. 744. "Quod si quid aliud liceret ex stylo conjicere, nemini certe potius quam Marco tribuerim, qui et ipse Joannes dictus est" (Lücke, *Einleit. in d. Offenbar.* p. 780). Hitzig, *Ueber Joh. Markus*, 1843.

fluence as to be able to address the Seven Churches of Asia with almost more than Apostolic authority. But, as we can now prove, the Apocalypse was written about A.D. 68; and if John the Presbyter at that time exercised so powerful a sway over Asia, then there is little or no room left for the work of John the Apostle. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus (A.D. 196), spoke of John the Apostle and Philip[1] as the two great lights of Asia;[2] but if John the Presbyter is the exile of Patmos and the author of the Second and Third Epistles, he must have been, on the evidence of these writings, a "light of Asia" whose splendour was much more powerful than that of Philip, and so bright as to make the name even of the Apostle grow somewhat pale.

If the Presbyter wrote the Apocalypse, a large part of the evidence for the Asiatic residence of St. John falls to the ground. This is the actual result arrived at by Scholten, Lipsius, Keim, and other Dutch and German theologians, who fall back on an unauthorized and dubious quotation from Papias by Georgius Hamartolos, to the effect that John the Apostle was martyred by the Jews. Dionysius shows no trace of such wild conclusions, though they would naturally spring from his own conjecture; and, as for Georgius Hamartolos, we have the less scruple in setting aside his supposed quotation, because none of his predecessors for eight centuries know anything about it, and because in the very same sentence he has flagrantly mis-stated the known opinion of Origen.[3]

[1] The Apostle, not the Deacon (Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 39).

[2] Polycr. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 31; v. 24. See Routh, *Rel. Sacr.* p. 369.

[3] Georgius Hamartolos not only quotes Papias for the assertion that

IV. Keim dwells much on the fact that little or no mention is made of the Asiatic work of St. John till the close of the second century. It is not mentioned, he says, in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in the Ignatian Epistles, nor in Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, nor in the letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne. The answer to this difficulty, if it be one, is twofold. It is that, in the first place, there was no special reason why it should have been mentioned in any one of these documents; and that, in the second place, the "argument from silence" is always a most untrustworthy way of attempting to throw doubts on facts for which there is positive evidence. Are we to doubt the existence of Milton or of Jeremy Taylor—of Bacon or of Shakspeare—because these contemporaries make no allusion to each other in their voluminous writings? Humboldt points out that in the archives of Barcelona there is no trace of an event so important as the triumphal entry of Columbus; in Marco Polo's travels no mention of the wall of China; in the archives of Portugal no allusion to the travels of Amerigo Vespucci.[1] Michelet, in his *History of France*, states that the two chief historians of the Sicilian Vespers make no mention whatever of Procida, though he was undoubtedly the chief mover in that terrible event.[2] The *argumentum ex silentio* may be set aside as wholly unimportant. Moreover, in this instance it is singularly inappropriate, since it tells with redoubled force against the very existence of any separate "John

St. John had been martyred by the Jews, but says that Origen thought so too, which is the reverse of the fact (Orig. *in Matt.*).

[1] *Gesch. d. Geogr.*, vol. iv. p. 160.

[2] Varnhagen von Ense, *Tagebücher*, vol. i. p. 123. These two instances are quoted by Krenkel, *Der Ap. Johan.* p. 139.

the Presbyter," who is passed over in still profounder silence by all sources of information alike.

It is quite certain that such an hypothesis as the denial of John's work in Asia would have appeared absurd to Dionysius. He was probably in possession of a stronger and more detailed tradition on the subject than we are. At any rate, he would not have listened for a moment to the supposition on which this recent theory depends. It requires us to believe that Irenæus (A.D. 180) *actually confounded John the Apostle with John the Presbyter!* Such a supposition is—I fear it must be said—utterly absurd. Irenæus repeatedly refers to "John," and "John the Lord's disciple," and fortunately it cannot be asserted that he is referring to this second John, because in one passage he expressly calls him "John the disciple of the Lord who leaned upon his breast, and himself published the Gospel while living in Ephesus of Asia."[1] There is in Irenæus no trace of any other John; nor was there any such trace in the writings of Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, or Apollinarius, Bishop of Hierapolis — two persons who were eminently likely to be well informed about the history of the Christian Church in those two cities. Irenæus tells us that Polycarp had been the disciple of St. John, and had always referred to him about disputed questions, and had felt for him an unbounded reverence. Now Irenæus too was of Asiatic origin, and knew the traditions of Ephesus. He had himself been a hearer of Polycarp, and has left a most graphic description of the manner in which the old man used to demean himself. And yet we are asked to believe that

[1] See Iren. *c. Haer.* ii. 22, § 5; iii. 1, § 1; iii. 3, § 4; v. 30, § 1; 33, §§ 3, 4; and *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24.

when he calls Polycarp "a hearer of John" he mistook John the Apostle for John the Presbyter, though of this John the Presbyter there is not so much as a tradition, however faint, until we come to the middle of the third century; and no trace even then except a vague report that there were at Ephesus two graves known as graves of John! But St. Jerome furnishes us with conclusive evidence of the extremely valueless character of this grain of supposed fact in the ever-widening ocean of theory. He says (*De Viris Illustr.*) that "another tomb is shown at Ephesus as the tomb of John the Presbyter, ALTHOUGH SOME THINK THAT THEY ARE BOTH TOMBS OF JOHN THE EVANGELIST"! Had it not been for dogmatic reasons, it is probable that no one would have thought anything else.

There is overwhelming evidence that John the Apostle spent many of his last years in Asia. It is one of the most unanimous and best supported of Church traditions, and it can be traced in a continuous sequence of evidence from the days of those who were his contemporaries, and had enjoyed his personal intercourse. That there was any John the Presbyter *distinct* from the Apostle, there is no evidence whatever. For to say that a second-hand report about two graves in Ephesus is any evidence, is idle. We should never have heard a word about these two graves, or at any rate, *this* is not the inference which would have been drawn from them, if Dionysius had not disliked to attribute the Apocalypse to St. John, and if Eusebius, in common with many others, had not felt a scarcely concealed desire to get rid of the book altogether. But if this imaginary "Presbyter" wrote the Apocalypse he must, on the showing of the book itself, have been

a very great man indeed, and one whose position enabled him to adopt a tone more authoritative than was adopted even by St. Paul. Is it conceivable that of such a man there would not be so much as a single other trace except the report of a dubious grave conjecturally assigned to him a century and a half after he was dead?

The ancient Fathers, both Greek and Latin, were not to be misled either by the specious suggestion of Dionysius, or by the bold assertion of Eusebius more than seventy years afterwards. Neither of these great writers found any one to follow them in their theoretic inferences from the loose clause of Papias. The Fathers had the works of Papias in their hands, and knew that he had nowhere disintegrated the individuality of the one and only "John," whom the Church would understand to be referred to when that name was mentioned. They also had in their hands the Acts of Leucius, which are probably the chief source of Johannine traditions; and it is clear from the silence of Eusebius and Dionysius that there the Presbyter had no existence. Accordingly, Apollinarius, Anastasius Sinaita, Maximus, and many others, go on repeating that Papias was a hearer of *John the Apostle*, without so much as noticing that there was anything doubtful in the passage out of which Eusebius has conjured his shadowy Presbyter.

V. But some will say, have we not two Epistles which profess to emanate from "John the Presbyter"? Undoubtedly we have, and this is one of the strongest evidences that "John the Presbyter" was no other than "John the Apostle," for as St. John nowhere claims his Apostolic authority, he would least of all be

likely to do so in two private notes to otherwise unknown individuals; notes which do not contain a single item of importance except where they exactly coincide with the thoughts, and indeed the actual words, of the First Epistle; notes which no separate "John the Presbyter" could possibly have written unless his mind were an echo of the Apostle's as well as his name. The Apostle calls himself "the Presbyter" in these little private letters, because the title sufficiently indicated his personality as the aged Head of the Asiatic Churches, and as one who belonged to a past epoch.[1] No other designation would have been so simple, so dignified, and so suitable. And most certainly Papias was not influenced by this circumstance; for while he was acquainted with the *First* Epistle of St. John, he does not seem to have known of the existence of the Second or Third.

VI. But the use of this designation, "the Elder," is further illustrated by Papias himself. He prefaces one of his oral traditions with the words, "These things *the Elder* used to say." We have seen that he used the word "Elders" in its narrower sense as synonymous with "Apostles." He meant by the term those who were the oldest and most venerated sources of tradition. He certainly would not have given this specific title to any one who belonged only to the second generation, and who would therefore have been a contemporary of his own. By "the Elder" he has been always and rightly understood to mean John, who, as the last survivor of the Apostolic band,

[1] I do not refer to the parallel case of St. Paul calling himself "the aged" in Philemon 9, because the word πρεσβυτὴς may there mean "an ambassador."

was "the Elder" κατ' ἐξοχήν. He does not give this title even to Aristion, though he too was a living witness of facts connected with the life and ministry of Christ.

Again, the remarks ascribed to this intensely venerated "Elder" are such as we can hardly imagine that any one short of an Apostle, and such an Apostle as St. John, would have had authority to make. For instance, the Gospel of St. Mark is universally believed to have been written under the guidance of St. Peter. The numerous graphic and vivid touches in which it abounds, as well as many other circumstances, lend probability to this tradition. Now who is the original authority for this belief? None other than "the Elder" himself. He informs Papias that "Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately all that he (Peter) related."[1] But, such being the case, what ordinary disciple, even of the first generation, would have ventured to criticise *ex cathedra*—to criticise as though from the standpoint of wider and more intimate knowledge — a Gospel which rested on the authority of the Chief of the Apostles? Surely there was no living man who would have ventured to do this, unless he were one whose opportunities of information were greater even than those of St. Peter? Yet "the Elder" does so. He informed Papias that though St. Mark wrote truthfully, to the best of his remembrance, he did *not* write the events of Christ's life and teaching in "chronological order" (*οὐ μέντοι τάξει*). Now this we should have thought, apart from the Fourth Gospel,

[1] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 39. Μάρκος μὲν ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου γενόμενος ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν ἀκριβῶς ἔγραψεν. The words may mean, "Wrote accurately all that he (Mark) remembered;" or, "all that he (Peter) related" (Westcott, *On the Canon*, p. 74). Here, again, we notice the ambiguity of the style of Papias.

is exactly what St. Mark does. But yet "the Elder" is right, because the Elder is none other than the Apostle and the Evangelist. He can speak even of St. Mark in a tone of superiority, as of one who "neither heard the Lord nor followed Him." He knew, as perhaps no other man knew, that the Synoptic Evangelists were but imperfectly informed as to the events and discourses of that ministry *in Judœa*, as apart from Galilee, which it was his own special privilege to make known to the world. Hence he can even venture to say of St. Peter himself, that "he used to frame his teachings with reference to the present needs of his hearers, and not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses." What mere secondary Presbyter would have spoken in terms of such familiarity and even equality of "the Pilot of the Galilean Lake"? In such criticisms do we not hear unmistakably the accents of an Apostle?

VII. There is, so far as I can see, but one slight objection to the arguments which I have here stated. It is that, if our conclusion be correct, Papias mentions *Aristion* in the same breath with St. John the Apostle, and even puts Aristion's name first.

I fully admit that this mention of Aristion is perplexing. Of this Aristion we know absolutely nothing.[1] It is startling, and it is a little painful, to find Papias referring to him as an eminent contemporary witness to the truth of the Gospel narrative, when we can give no information whatever respecting him. He is a *nominis umbra*, and nothing more.

[1] There is no authority for the assertion of the *Apostolical Constitutions* (vii. 46), which speaks of his martyrdom, and connects him with the Church of Smyrna.

So strongly has this been felt that some—and among them Renan—suppose that, instead of "the disciples of the Lord" in the second clause of the passage of Papias, we ought to read "*the disciples of disciples* (*μαθηταὶ μαθητῶν*) of the Lord," and that the word *μαθητῶν*—which would relegate Aristion and "John the Presbyter" to the second generation of disciples—has dropped out by the clerical error known as *homœoteleuton*. Another suggestion is, that the name of John in the *first* clause is simply interpolated. But since neither Eusebius nor any one else knew or dreamt of such readings, the conjectures merely rest on foregone conclusions. If we may thus tamper with ancient authors, we may make them say anything that we please. Moreover, a person who belonged to the *second* generation of disciples would not have furnished the sort of authority which Papias required. To that second generation he himself may be said to have belonged, for he was a contemporary of the daughters of Philip, and (as we have seen reason to believe) had talked in his youth with John the Apostle. What he wanted for the purposes of his *Expositions*, was oral testimony derived at first hand from the original sources.

I have sometimes thought, and still think, that Aristion is a name which conceals some well-known person.[1] The Jewish Apostles commonly bore two names: one among their own countrymen, and one for use among the Gentiles. There is nothing to forbid

[1] When I wrote this I was entirely unaware that Krenkel, in his *Der Apostel Johannes*, p. 117, had been led to make exactly the same conjecture. *Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt!* Polycrates tells us that John and Philip were at this time the "two great lights of Asia." If "Philip" were not a Greek name, one might have suspected that Aristion was a local name borne by Philip.

the supposition that the otherwise unknown designation may in reality refer to some Apostle or Apostolic man who, like St. John and St. Philip, had taken refuge in Asia from the storm of persecution and calamity which had burst over Judæa, and who was known at Hierapolis by the Greek name Aristion. If this very reasonable and moderate supposition be allowed, all difficulty vanishes. What Papias then means to say is, that long before he wrote his book it had been his habit to gather all he could about the statements of the Apostles, whom he calls "Elders"—and among them about the statements of John—from those who had seen them; and that he also took notes of the living "oracles" furnished to him *directly* by Aristion (who was evidently well known to Papias's readers) and even—which is the reason why he keeps the name to the last as being the fact which he most wished to emphasize—by "John the Elder;"—the same John—ὁ πάνυ—the only John of whom any one knew anything—who so long survived his brother Apostles, and to whose *indirect* testimony Papias has just referred.

VIII. We have then sifted to the bottom the whole of the so-called evidence for the existence of a "John the Presbyter" who was not John the Apostle.

It is—

1. A passage of Papias, capable of quite a different interpretation, and which seems to have received a quite different interpretation, not only for a full century after he was dead, but also (in spite of Eusebius) in subsequent times.

2. A hesitating and tentative guess of Dionysius, rising solely from his avowed inability to regard the Apostle as the author of the Apocalypse.

3. Some dubious gossip (*φασὶν*) about two tombs at Ephesus, which, if trustworthy at all, was believed by some to be due to an attempt to reconcile the inventions of rival guides.

4. Eagerness on the part of Eusebius to support this inverted pyramid of conjectures, out of positive dislike to the Apocalypse caused by the abuses of Millenarians.[1]

"Only this, and nothing more"! And these are the grounds on which we are now asked to set aside the direct or indirect testimony of Papias,[2] of Justin Martyr,[3] of Polycarp,[4] of Polycrates,[5] of Irenæus,[6] of Apollonius,[7] of Clemens of Alexandria, of Origen, of Melito,[8] of Andreas, of Arethas, and, in fact, of unbroken Church tradition, and to assign the works of the last and one of the greatest Apostles to an obscure and dubious Presbyter! It is on this evidence—so late and so tottering—evidence based on an awkwardly expressed but perfectly explicable passage of Papias, a simple writer who had no pretence to subtlety of intellect or grace of style—and on a professed quotation from Papias in the ninth century by Georgius Hamartolos, who, in the very same sentence, attributes to Origen an opinion which his own writings show to be false—

[1] Speaking of the "certain strange parables and teachings of the Saviour, and certain other somewhat mystical things," which Papias recorded, "from unwritten tradition," Eusebius specially mentions "some millennium of years after the resurrection from the dead, during which the kingdom of Christ shall be established bodily upon this earth."

[2] *Ap.* Anastas. Sinaita, *Hexaem.* i. (Routh, i. 15).

[3] *Dial. c. Tryph.* 81.

[4] *Ap.* Iren., &c., and Euseb. *Chron. ad Olymp.* 220.

[5] See Jer. *de Virr. Illustr.* xlv.; Euseb. *H. E.* v. 26 (Routh, i. 372).

[6] *Ap.* Euseb. v. 20, &c.

[7] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 18.

[8] Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 26.

that some critics have ventured to rewrite the history of the first century; to assert, in spite of overwhelming evidence, that the Apostle St. John never was in Asia at all; that Polycarp never saw him; that the John for whom Polycarp expressed so profound a reverence was only a "Presbyter" who, like himself, belonged to the second generation of Christians; that Irenæus was mistaken in supposing that Polycarp meant the Apostle when he only meant the Presbyter; that, if this be thought impossible, the letter of Irenæus to Florinus must be regarded as a forgery;[1] that this "Presbyter," whose very existence was only conjectured a century later, is quoted as an oracle by Papias; that Polycrates, himself Bishop of Ephesus less than a century after John's death, made the same preposterous mistake which is attributed to Irenæus;[2] and that nebulous as he is, unknown as he is to early writers, utterly as every fact about him has perished, the "Presbyter" was still the author either of the Gospel and Epistle, or of the Apocalypse, or of the Second and Third Epistles, or of all these writings alike. *Credat Judæus Apella—non ego!*

But the impugners of St. John's Asiatic work raise one or two chronological difficulties. They say that if

[1] This entirely baseless suggestion of Scholten does not at all help his cause, for, apart from the letter to Florinus, the testimony of Irenæus, in his great work, *Contra Haereses*, is quite distinct.

[2] Scholten sets aside the testimony of Polycrates, because he calls John "a priest wearing the *petalon*." But (1) It is by no means impossible that St. John, who, at one period, was so fond of symbols, may have adopted this symbol to express the truth which he so prominently states (Rev. i. 6; v. 10). (2) It is not clear that Polycrates, in this highly rhetorical passage, meant his words to be taken literally. (3) Even if he did, he may have been misled by giving a literal meaning to some metaphor of St. John.

Irenæus knew Polycarp, who knew St. John, all three must have attained to extraordinary longevity. The longevity need not have been very unusual. Tradition has always supposed that St. John reached extreme old age. Supposing that he died as early as A.D. 90, and that Irenæus wrote about A.D. 180, then, as M. Renan remarks, the difference which separated the two would be the same as that which separates us from the last years of Voltaire. Yet, without any miracle of longevity, M. de Rémusat had often conversed about Voltaire with l'Abbé Morellet, who had actually known him. If the martyrdom of Polycarp took place, as Mr. Waddington seems to have proved, about A.D. 155,[1] Polycarp was then 86 years old. Consequently he must have been born in A.D. 69, and would have been at least 21 years old when St. John died, and there is no difficulty in the supposition that Irenæus, as a boy, had seen and known a man who had conversed with the Apostle who had laid his head on Jesus' breast.

A credulous spirit of innovation is welcome to believe and to proclaim that any or all of St. John's writings were written by "John the Presbyter." They were: but "John the Presbyter" is none other than John the Apostle.[2]

[1] *Mém. de l'Institut*, xxvi. 235.

[2] This argument has already been printed in the *Expositor*, because I wished to subject it to the test of criticism. Some of my arguments about the "Beast" and the "False Prophet" have, for the same reason, appeared in the same admirable journal. I am allowed, by the kindness of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, to use the same material here.

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